

# Extraterrestrial Intelligence

Amazing New Insights  
from Qur'an

Sayeedur Rahman



“The sort of arguments that the author’s perfect-minded self has amassed establishes the intellectual marvel of not only the Qur’an but that of Islam too.”

—**Dr. Essa Mansuri**

Chairman, World Islamic Forum, London, UK

“I read the manuscript cover to cover with passion and due care... The topic is new, but the author’s argumentation and as well as his approach is impressive...”

—**Moulana Syed Salman Hussaini Nadwi**

Professor of Islamic Studies, Nadwatul Ulama, India

“Not only commendable but an enviable book too.”

—**Dr. M. Zaki Kirmani**

Chairman, Centre for Studies on Science, Aligarh, India



“This book is the continuation of the exploration of Qur’anic insights, which the author has inherited from his great father, ...the reviver of the Qur’anic thought...Indeed, the book is the result of a vast and careful study of the universe in the light of the marvelous Qur’anic statements.”

—**Dr. Saeed-al-Azami-al-Nadwi**

Principal, Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow, India

“The author has inherited largely from the celebrated taste and deep foresight which his glorious father was endowed with....The Qur’anic philosophy he has propounded shall, God willing, become a source of evolution and accomplishment for the Muslim scientists, and thought-provocation and further inclination towards the Qur’an for the non-Muslims in the contemporary world.”

—**Moulana Mohammed Salim Qasimi**

Rector, Darul Uloom Waqf Deoband, India

“It has been attempted at revealing the greatest intellectual marvel of the Qur’an upon the humanity by bringing to light the modern Qur’anic insights concerning the extraterrestrial earths, abundance of life in them, reality of man, and its own true nature.”

—**Moulana Samiul Haq Haqqani**

Principal, Jamia Haqqania, Pakistan



To

Prophet Adam (pbuh) who was taught the names of absolutely  
all things and made *a* successor in the universe along  
with his progeny.

The holy Prophet (pbuh) who passed on the Scripture to us  
with utmost honesty and accuracy.

All the predecessor exegetes who served the Scripture with great  
sincerity in their respective times.

All the men of science whose understanding of the natural  
world has an unprecedented bearing on the contemporary  
understanding of the Scripture too.

My father the late Moulana Mohammed Shihabuddin Nadvi  
who was the pioneer in this realm.



Soon shall we reveal to them our signs in the  
environs of the earth and the skies and in their  
own lives until it becomes manifest to them that  
this is the truth. Isn't it enough for your Lord to  
be witness over everything?

(41:53)

Say: "Praise belongs to the Almighty alone.  
Soon shall he reveal to you his signs, and you  
would certainly recognize them."

(27:93)

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## Foreword

Since my student days, drawing inspiration from my eminent father, I was very much fascinated by a holy prophecy that declared the Qur'an to be such a dynamic and marvelous book whose miracles might never end. The Qur'an itself very clearly and compellingly proclaims that it would shortly be revealing to mankind some of the divine signs in the environs of the earth and the skies and in its own lives in order to demonstrate before it its truthful nature (41:53). Likewise, it has also been undertaken to lay bare its very own true nature after a while (38:88). After his demise in 2002, it so happened that while reciting the Qur'an one morning, a great universal reality conveyed through verse 2:33 was unfolded to me instantaneously. My fascination knew no bounds then, and I took to examining the original Qur'anic text afresh and came up with roughly 750 verses striving to interpret and weave together all of them under a single unified philosophy of the universe. The golden rule of a part of the Qur'an interprets the other was made the most of all through the book like never before.

Qur'an enjoys a preeminent position in Islam, as it is only the latter that is rooted in the former. In keeping with this spirit, another holy tradition exhorts its followers to revolve with it whichever way it revolves. This entails that whatever guidance the Qur'an keeps bestowing from time to time is incumbent on its followers to heed it.

I completed this work first in Urdu in 2007. It was, then, sent to dozens of scholars soliciting their views concerning it. Quite a few of them responded



positively, whereas others simply overlooked it. Some of the leading periodicals of the Indian sub-continent too simultaneously published the first 4 chapters of the book with much prominence. Now, its Arabic version too is being serialized by another premier magazine of the Muslim world. Since 2009, the present version has been fully made available online on [authonomy.com](http://authonomy.com) too. Thus, a good five years have been spent striving to achieve a consensus among the Muslim community before its eventual publication in the book form. I am indebted, from among the category of Islamic scholars, to Dr. Saeed Al-Azami Al-Nadwi, Moulana Mohammed Salim Qasimi, Moulana Samiul Haq Haqqani, Dr. Essa Mansuri, and Moulana Syed Salman Hussaini Nadwi, and, from that of science and philosophy, to Prof. H. Paul Shuch, Prof. Klaus Klostermaier, Dr. Mohiuddin Kabir, Dr. Arnold Yasin Mol and Dr. M. Zaki Kirmani for their valuable time in reviewing the manuscript in a positive light.

I, now, commit the book to the consideration of the learned readers at large. May the Almighty bless one and all!

**Sayeedur Rahman**

April 4, 2012  
Bangalore

## 1

## The Natural World

Man's outlook of the universe has undergone a sea change consequent to the phenomenal advances he has made in the realm of astronomy today. Approximately a century ago, it was a time when it was so small and confined that it prided itself on no more than a handful of plainly visible stars. And even a couple of more centuries earlier to that it was considered to be a geo-centric one. But the rapid strides of science and technology during the twentieth century with the invention of a range of powerful telescopes and the constant space explorations greatly contributed to the emergence of the other dazzling and immensely illuminating face of the universe, rendering the older concept a tinny and miserable speck in relation to the mind-blowing and boundless sea of the emerging one. It has, thus, discovered in the universe more than 100 billion galaxies, each one of them populated by hundreds of billions of Sun-like or many times still bigger stars. And our very own Milky Way galaxy is home to around 400 billion stars. These numbers are so enormous that if only the stars of our one single Galaxy are to be dispersed among the present inhabitants of the Earth, then each one of us would be richer by at least 60 of them!

All that is visible to our naked eyes in the sky is around a mere 6,000 stars. All of them are the members of our own Galaxy, and lie in the immediate neighborhood of the Sun. They are located in one of its spiral arms at a distance of around 25,000 light years from its core. Apart from these



adjoining stars, nothing is usually visible to the plain eyes across the length and breadth of the night sky. Thus, whatever is directly visible to us bears absolutely no significance in comparison to the Galaxy, let alone the amazing universe. Accordingly, the entire universe lies far beyond our eyesight, to be felt or figured out with the help of some extremely powerful telescopes alone. Its true expanse could also be discerned from the fact that the far-flung galaxies are located at such inconceivable distances as billions of light years in every direction. Every galaxy varies from a few thousand to hundreds of thousands of light years in diameter, and lies millions of light years away from the neighboring one. Even the average distance between the stars of the Galaxy is five light years.

The true picture of the universe was revealed to us consequent to the invention of some of the most advanced telescopes in the twentieth century. As a result, modern astronomy is striving relentlessly in order to figure out as to what might exist in this gigantic universe. Do more solar systems similar to our own exist in the Galaxy or elsewhere? If they do, then do they possess terrestrial planets, or simply earths similar to the Earth? If yes, then do they harbor life or the intelligent one as well? What might be the form of life there? Does man exist only in this precise part of the universe and in the obscure outskirts of the Galaxy, or he enjoys many more similar abodes as well?

Science enjoyed a rather easy and comfortable ride till this point. It did not prove much difficult for it to sit back on the Earth and realize the true expanse and the broader picture of the universe chiefly by studying and analyzing the electromagnetic radiations emanating from the heavenly bodies. But, the real challenge it is confronted with today is in finding other Earth-like planets in space and life in them. There is no denying of the fact that it is an extremely demanding task and a difficult terrain. Science is very much aware of the limitations in this field. It is proving to be next to impossible for it just to venture out of the Solar System physically to reach the nearest star located at a distance of 4.3 light years or 40 trillion kilometers. Let alone this nearest star, man hasn't been able to land even on Mars, our neighborhood planet situated at eight hundred thousand times nearer to it or merely 50 million kilometers away. The same range of powerful telescopes that greatly enabled science to fathom billions of light years deep into the universe and picture the distant galaxies and other celestial bodies with great accuracy

have failed miserably in detecting the planets revolving around even the nearest stars. This is because the light and other electromagnetic radiations radiated by them are billions and trillions of times fainter than their parent stars, rendering the telescopes ineffective in dealing with such an awkward situation. The optical telescope has lost its utility in this sphere long ago. The more powerful infrared one, together with the other indirect techniques, have, however, until the year 2002, discovered roughly 70 solar systems in our nearby vicinity of around 250 light years in every direction. Research and development is presently continuing with frantic pace and the present telescopes are being improved upon to enable micro-level studies of the heavenly bodies with more precision. The most optimistic aspect of these solar systems lying in our immediate neighborhood is that all the 200-odd planets discovered in them so far are all gaseous in their makeup and are comparatively larger and of the size of our Jupiter, whereas the smaller terrestrial ones are yet to fall into our grasp.

As a result, science is endeavoring very hard to determine as to which of these planets might be the terrestrial ones in order to search for life there. Many exclusive projects have been commissioned long ago under the banner of the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence (SETI) in order to communicate with the potential technological civilizations through artificial radio waves. Effort is being made under one such project to communicate with 40 such civilizations. This is the only true and effective mode the science is presently endowed with in its search for life in the heavens. But, this too is an extremely time-consuming and much annoying task. If, for instance, an effort is made in this fashion to communicate with a prospective terrestrial planet revolving around a 12 light years distant star, Tau Ceti, as is the case with the project SETI today, it would take the signal exactly the same 12 years to reach the target. If it so happens that some creatures are readily available there to receive it, are scientifically and technologically well advanced like we do to be able to decipher it, and respond at once with the same coin, then it would take another 12 years for the counter-signal to follow back to us. It would, thus, take a minimum of 24 years merely for the 'handshake.' Hence, rather than we contacting the aliens afresh and re-inventing the wheel, the major thrust of SETI today is centered on locating and listening to the prospective signals already beamed to us by the aliens themselves in their search of their



own extraterrestrials. It should be born in mind once again that all these efforts are being undertaken in anticipation that the probable extraterrestrial civilizations around us are more superior in scientific and technological terms and better skilled in interstellar communications than we do. But, this task too is not that much easy either. It is, according to a scientist, akin to finding a signal bottled and cast in the deep oceans long ago. It is for these reasons that astronomy wasn't able to meet with any success as yet. Today we have a situation where some western government-funded premier space organizations have been forced to wind up their respective SETI projects in utter desperation, whereas there are still more, particularly the non-governmental ones, which are persisting in their endeavor in the earnest hope that they might succeed one day.

This pertains to the practical aspect of the search for extraterrestrial abodes of intelligence physically. But, modern astronomy has amassed many significant and irrefutable intellectual and rational arguments concerning their existence in abundance. That is to say that it has met with fair success in discovering the smoke permeating all through the universe, but it is yet to lay its hands on the precise fire giving rise to it. And in the present context it seems highly probable that man could just firmly argue upon their definite existence, rather than hunting them down physically. The most striking argument of the present-day astronomy in this respect is as to why has man found existence at this precise point of time in a very long geological history of an insignificant planet of an ordinary star at the outskirts of an average galaxy of the astonishingly old and gigantic universe, where he enjoys centrality neither in his own Solar System nor in the Galaxy, let alone the universe?

In its attempt to work out a solution to this core issue, science was able to gather some quite significant insights from the Solar System alone. Of the four of its terrestrial planets — Mercury, Venus, Earth, and Mars — particularly the last two resemble with each other the most. It should be borne in mind that generally it is the kind of these planets that science is currently on the look out for in the outer space. It has constantly tried to explore Mars by sending an array of probes both into its space and on the surface. As a result, it has found profound scientific evidence suggesting the abundance of liquid water on its surface in its distant past, which continues to exist even

today in the form of frozen ice hidden deep beneath its surface. Existence of water, as a rule, is a precursor to life. Mars boasts a very thin atmosphere even today, compelling the science to draw the inference that it might have been much denser in the presence of surface liquid water billions of years ago. Science intends to conclude from this evidence that whenever the circumstances were conducive on Mars in the past, life might have existed there in some form or the other, just to be obliterated when they turned hostile. If so, then life just cannot remain confined to the Earth alone. But, in the same breath, it cannot be presumed to be similar to our own either. It can also be deduced from this on a much wider scale that wherever in the universe Earth-like planets are found to possess the basic life-sustaining ingredients, life itself might exist there. But, science deems only those ingredients to be life-sustaining that it is obliged to in our present context. It is absolutely not necessary, otherwise, for the components of life elsewhere to be similar to those over here too; if Carbon, Oxygen, and Nitrogen are its building blocks here, it can be some other elements elsewhere. Basing upon these and other such arguments, in the estimation of modern astronomy, the number of potential terrestrial planets and the intelligent civilizations flourishing in just a single galaxy like ours might even exceed the incredible 10 million mark! But, still, there are many more scientists who vehemently dispute it and believe that this fascinating universe belongs exclusively to us alone. In fact, such enormous difference of opinion among the scientific community quite clearly portrays the respective fairly optimistic and utterly pessimistic tendencies of both the parties to the dispute. If such is the case of one single galaxy, then it is anybody's guess as to what might be in store for us in the other at least 100 billion more galaxies. Moreover, there is growing scientific evidence today suggesting the existence of many more invisible universes on the lines of the present visible one as well.

These are some of the empirical and observational realities and assumptions based thereupon concerning the true expanse of the universe, the potential multiplicity of the earths and the probable existence of intelligent life in them, which have been dealt with very briefly here. Now, viewed from another angle, the modern science has benefited us in an unprecedented way not only in our understanding of the many vital realities of the natural world it has also enabled us greatly to place a whole host of statements concerning



it of the Qur'an in their right perspectives. The ground-breaking insights thus obtained shall go a very long way in resolving many of the riddles faced by the science itself in its ardent quest for the aliens. This humble writer, thus, wishes to share with the esteemed readers at large quite a few of them in the following pages. Hence, at the very outset, the Qur'an proclaims thus:

- 1) They did not esteem the Almighty the way he deserves, whereas all the earths would be in his fist on the Last Day and the skies would be rolled up in his right hand...<sup>1</sup>

This is a very precise and definite assertion of the Qur'an concerning the multiplicity of the earths. Here the original Arabic word *jamee* (all), which accompanies another word to emphasize and pluralize it, has occurred with 'earth' denoting its plurality. Basing upon this verse, a multitude of the classical exegetes of the Qur'an since the earliest period has argued upon more than one earth in the universe. Chiefly among them are: Zamakhshari (died 1143 AD), Razi (1209), Qurtubi (1272), Nasafi (1301), Baizawi (1389), Aaloosi (1853) etc. Also Tabri (922), Baghwi (1122), Ibn Kathir (1372), Suyuthi (1505) etc. too have quoted extensively from Hadith substantiating this Qur'anic statement. More of this type of statements would be dealt with in due course.

When we have at least one clear statement upon the plurality of earths, we shall now deliberate upon their actual numbers, which shall, in return, reinforce the former further. Nearly all the exegetes mentioned above have argued upon seven earths similar to the seven skies. To arrive at this precise number, if their rational lot has taken to arguing from chapter 65:12 of the Qur'an in the light of the prevalent astronomical knowledge of the time, the others have related a few narrations too. It should be remembered at this point of time that as far as the skies are concerned, the Qur'an definitely mentions their number to be seven at not merely one or two places, but repeatedly on seven different occasions. On the contrary, however, one doesn't find any such specification or stipulation concerning the number of earths in the universe. Nor have they appeared anywhere in their plural form either. It is high time, therefore, that in order to arrive at their real number, we took to gaining newer and more direct insights from the Qur'an in the light of modern human knowledge accumulated over centuries of observation and experiment

rather than the one that was based purely upon ancient logic. So the Qur'an portrays the universe very marvelously on another occasion thus:

- 2) Blessed is He who made in the sky constellations, and in them made lamps and luminous moons.<sup>2</sup>

'Lamp' has metaphorically been used here to denote the sun, as a similitude has been drawn between the two at another place thus:

- 2.1) He made the Sun a lamp.<sup>3</sup>

So, the pronoun 'them' in the verse under discussion is compulsorily indicating the nearer noun 'constellations,' rather than the farther 'sky,' which the earlier exegetes had thought to be the case due to the lack of any other alternate interpretation then. As such, the suns and the moons are contained in the constellations, and the constellations themselves, in the sky. This contention is further strengthened by the following assertions that the sky has basically been divided into constellations themselves:

- 2.2) I swear by the sky of constellations.<sup>4</sup>

- 2.3) Indeed, we have made constellations in the sky and adorned it for the onlookers.<sup>5</sup>

The word *burooj*, with its singular *burj*, used in these verses to denote 'constellations,' literally means castles or towers. But, in the Qur'anic terminology, according to the noted exegete Razi, one of the meanings it has historically found is the twelve stellar constellations of yore. And it has found ready acceptance among a great number of former and latter exegetes and researchers too. In the modern context, however, as they were totally unrealistic, speculative in nature and based upon the classification of merely the partially visible part of the sky, these constellations of the ancient astronomy have lost their relevance completely. In the modern astronomy, though, the whole of the sky, both visible and invisible to the naked eye, has quite realistically been divided into such larger constellations of stars as are known today as the 'galaxies.' Thus, in view of both the above Qur'anic statements and the present corroborative scientific evidence, the meaning of 'constellation' could fairly and reasonably be enlarged and substituted with the wider 'galaxy' today. And even this latter term seems to be more in



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harmony with its literal meaning than the former.

Consider another significant aspect now. The words 'suns' and 'moons' stated to exist in the galaxies have appeared in their singular forms in the original Arabic text, whereas logic requires that to exist in multiple galaxies, they should be multiple in numbers themselves. As such, each galaxy should consist of no less than a sun and a moon. It, thus, shows that both of these words are appearing as plurals in their generic forms. There is ample evidence of the generic nouns appearing in singular forms in the Qur'an without the customary *aliflam* prefixed to them. 'Sign,' 'house,' and 'grain' in chapters 3:50, 7:78, and 36:33 respectively are a few other instances from the same Qur'anic usage. Now if considered in the present context of the roughly 100 billion galaxies discovered so far in the universe, there have to be at least the same number of suns and moons, but their upper limit could be anything. Their true number could even be the one that is arrived at by multiplying the 100 billion galaxies with the hundreds of billions of more stars that each one of them is composed of. As far as the suns are concerned, there just cannot be an element of surprise in their numbers for the modern astronomy, as it has itself practically demonstrated to us that every star in the galaxies is a sun in its own right. The numbers concerning the moons, however, are definitely quite revealing and much fantasizing. But, the moot point here is that when the universe is home to a minimum of 100 billion moons, then what could the number of the earths in it be? Can there be a moon without an earth to revolve around? Or, can a satellite exist without a planet? A moon is always the precursor of an earth accompanying it. As such, earths too have to be around the same 100 billion at the least!

The real number of earths in the universe could also be deduced from the fact that merely one of the 400 billion stars of our one single galaxy, i.e., the Sun, carries around it eight planets or earths and more than 60 moons revolving around them. Apart from them, 70 more solar systems carrying 200-odd earths too have so far been discovered in our immediate vicinity spanning around an area of just 250 light years in every direction, which is an extremely negligible fraction in comparison to the total area of the Galaxy 100,000 light years across. Remember, modern astronomy was only able to discover these many earths in our close by neighborhood, and it doesn't rule out the possible existence of the many more fainter ones in it. So, if the present

telescopes are improved upon or some other superior technology is worked out then it could radically alter the current scenario in the very same environs and elsewhere in the Galaxy too. When such is the case with an ordinary galaxy, then one can truly imagine the other remaining galaxies and the number of earths present in them as well. But, at this point of time, it is an altogether different matter if these earths are rocky and could be habitable like our own Mercury, Venus, Earth, and Mars or gaseous and inhabitable like Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune.

It could now be seen as to how brilliantly the Qur'an causes newer and far-reaching meanings to emerge in the contemporary scientific age from the same set of old words with a mere pronoun indicating the right noun. It could also be gathered from the present discussion that the Qur'an, rather than resorting to direct speech, cherishes to deal with and conveys the realities of the natural phenomena in such a meaningfully implied phraseology whose true purport should only be revealed at an appropriate time. In the present verse itself, for instance, rather than affirming the constellations and galaxies to be containing earths in clear and unambiguous terms, a very meaningful suggestion has been made that they do comprise moons. In other words, suns and moons have clearly been mentioned here, whereas the earths which form the crucial intermediate link between them have intentionally been omitted so that this great natural reality should only marvelously be revealed upon man after he himself is able to figure it out through his own instincts and knowledge. It should be born in mind here that far from any thought of the multiplicity of the moons, man in the ancient period was completely oblivious even of the fact that our own moon too owed its existence to that of the Earth. The forthcoming discussions would effectively unveil the expediency behind this amazing mode of Qur'anic expression. Furthermore, the current Qur'anic affirmation of the presence of the suns in the galaxies bears another significant universal insight for us. It firmly establishes that all the stars contained in the galaxies are the suns in their respective spheres! As stated above, modern science too considers them to be nothing but the suns.

It should particularly be noted that all the galaxies discovered so far by the modern science are contained in the nearest of the seven skies according to the Qur'an:

2.4) We have adorned the nearest of the skies with the adornment of the



harmony with its literal meaning than the former.

Consider another significant aspect now. The words 'suns' and 'moons' stated to exist in the galaxies have appeared in their singular forms in the original Arabic text, whereas logic requires that to exist in multiple galaxies, they should be multiple in numbers themselves. As such, each galaxy should consist of no less than a sun and a moon. It, thus, shows that both of these words are appearing as plurals in their generic forms. There is ample evidence of the generic nouns appearing in singular forms in the Qur'an without the customary *aliflam* prefixed to them. 'Sign,' 'house,' and 'grain' in chapters 3:50, 7:78, and 36:33 respectively are a few other instances from the same Qur'anic usage. Now if considered in the present context of the roughly 100 billion galaxies discovered so far in the universe, there have to be at least the same number of suns and moons, but their upper limit could be anything. Their true number could even be the one that is arrived at by multiplying the 100 billion galaxies with the hundreds of billions of more stars that each one of them is composed of. As far as the suns are concerned, there just cannot be an element of surprise in their numbers for the modern astronomy, as it has itself practically demonstrated to us that every star in the galaxies is a sun in its own right. The numbers concerning the moons, however, are definitely quite revealing and much fantasizing. But, the moot point here is that when the universe is home to a minimum of 100 billion moons, then what could the number of the earths in it be? Can there be a moon without an earth to revolve around? Or, can a satellite exist without a planet? A moon is always the precursor of an earth accompanying it. As such, earths too have to be around the same 100 billion at the least!

The real number of earths in the universe could also be deduced from the fact that merely one of the 400 billion stars of our one single galaxy, i.e., the Sun, carries around it eight planets or earths and more than 60 moons revolving around them. Apart from them, 70 more solar systems carrying 200-odd earths too have so far been discovered in our immediate vicinity spanning around an area of just 250 light years in every direction, which is an extremely negligible fraction in comparison to the total area of the Galaxy 100,000 light years across. Remember, modern astronomy was only able to discover these many earths in our close by neighborhood, and it doesn't rule out the possible existence of the many more fainter ones in it. So, if the present

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2.4) We have adorned the nearest of the skies with the adornment of the



stars.<sup>6</sup>

The Qur'an also states that all the seven skies are located one above the other:

2.5) The one who created seven skies one above the other...<sup>7</sup>

When all the heavenly bodies discovered so far are contained in the nearest sky, and when the skies themselves are placed one above the other, it could rightly be inferred from it that only the nearest sky is visible, and that the remaining six of them lie concealed from us. We shall now discuss the composition of these six invisible skies too in the light of the following four statements of the Qur'an, which shall reinforce our present contention even further:

3) Don't you observe as to how the Almighty has created seven skies one above the other as layers, and in them made the moons luminous and the suns, lamps?<sup>8</sup>

In the same way as the suns and the moons were used in the previous statement in their singular forms in the context of all the galaxies of the nearest sky, here too they have appeared in a similar fashion in relation to all the seven skies. The customary *alif lam* too has clearly been prefixed to each of them indicating their use as generic nouns. Thus, the suns and moons are very much the part and parcel of not just the present sky, but that of the remaining six of them as well. Yet again, with the existence of the moons, the companion earths too are convincingly established in all the seven skies! And with the uniformity of expression employed concerning all the seven skies here, it could further be deduced from it that there also exists uniformity between each of them concerning the number of earths they comprise. And when the nearest sky contains a minimum of 100 billion of them, then similar would the case be with each of the remaining skies too! It is now very much obvious as to why the generic *alif lam* has been prefixed to the 'suns' and the 'moons' appearing particularly in the current statement alone in contrast to the previous one when they are being used in their generic forms at both of these places. It is, in reality, being intended to convey through this difference of expression in the previous statement that even though the suns and the moons do appear in their generic forms there too, they are, however, not present in their entirety only in the first of the skies, but in comparison to their sum total

in all the skies their number is merely partial in nature. So, the *alif lam* was prefixed to them only where they were to denote their total number rather than the partial one. This prefix in the current statement is, therefore, simultaneously indicative of their usage in their generic forms as well as their entirety. It is, thus, very much evident that both of the current and the previous statements are mutually interpreting the apparent ambiguities present in either of them with remarkable ease; if the latter statement is effectively clearing the doubt concerning the generic nature of the suns and the moons occurring in the former statement, the former statement itself is specifying the actual number of earths being affirmed in the latter. Thus, the latter statement quite convincingly consolidates and supplements the former. We find another statement of the Qur'an in absolute conformity with the present one in the following words:

4) Say: Can you be ungrateful to him who has created the earths in two days, and equate others with him? *Remember*, he is the Lord of all the worlds. He has placed in the earths stabilizers from above, blessed them, and determined their foods in four days, alike for those who question. He, then, turned towards the skies, which were in the state of smoke then, and said to them and the earths, "Both of you submit yourselves willingly or unwillingly." They said, "We do submit ourselves willingly." Then, he secured them (i.e., the earths) in the seven skies in two days and revealed in each of the skies its due command. And we have adorned the nearest sky too with a few lamps, and safeguarded it. Such is the estimation of the all-mighty, the all-knowing!<sup>9</sup>

Four plus two, the six-day creation account here comprises the formation and coming into being of all the natural phenomena in existence today:

4.1) He created the skies and the earths and all that exists in between in six days...<sup>10</sup>

It flows from it, hence, that the current statement is illustrative of the state of these phenomena prior to their creation in their current form and as to how did all the seven skies and the other bodies present therein come into being. Thus, a mention is being made here, in line with the previous statement, concerning the creation of all the earths in existence in all the seven skies in their generic form, rather than that of our own solitary one. Another



significant argument favoring this contention is that when it has taken a total of six days for the creation of all that exists, then how can it take exactly the two-thirds of it for the creation of merely a single earth? It should be born in mind that the total mass of the Earth pales utterly before that of the present universe; it is roughly 1.3 million times smaller than just our single sun, the Sun itself is around 400 billion times smaller than the Galaxy, the Galaxy is about 100 billion times smaller than the total matter discovered so far in the universe. Furthermore, the proportion of the matter discovered so far to the space is just an atom of Hydrogen to 7.6 cubic meters of space. So, the gigantic nature and the true expanse of the universe could very well be imagined. In addition, there are six more skies and the matter contained in them as well. It unmistakably indicates, thus, that the earths too must be inestimable!

Nevertheless, while basing ourselves on the enormous mass of the seven skies and their boundless frontiers and arguing upon the existence of innumerable earths commensurate with their formation in two-thirds of the total time of creation, it has to be remembered that the earths do not exist in space on their own; their very existence depends on that of their companion stars, the stars themselves owe their subsistence to that of the galaxies, and so on. This is because all the heavenly bodies hold each other through an invisible force known as the universal law of gravitation, to which the Qur'an too stunningly refers to as the invisible pillars:

4.2) He has created the skies with pillars invisible to you...<sup>11</sup>

The first four days of creation compulsorily includes the formation of all the earths, their companion suns, and all the other heavenly bodies bound together under the universal law of gravitation thus. The singling out of the earths with a special mention, however, signifies their central character, and their particular existence and preponderance is firmly established in every nook and corner of all the seven skies. Besides, if the prevalence of the earths in all the skies was argued upon in the previous statement with the mere mention of the attendant moons, a similar case is being made out in the current one of the compulsory existence of the accompanying suns with the solitary mention of the earths in all the skies. Thus, arguing upon the existence of suns through that of the earths once again reinforces the far-reaching reality that

it is the latter that enjoys centrality of endurance all through the skies, and that the subsistence of the former is purely secondary in nature and relative to that of the latter. In other words, the fundamental objective behind the creation of the suns is their service to their respective earths and those inhabiting them. Even though the earths appear to remain subservient to the suns by revolving around them, but in reality, it is the latter that are at the constant service of the former and those who dwell in them by providing them with the means of sustenance. The Qur'an very clearly points to this fact in the following words:

4.3) He has subjugated to you the night and the day and the Sun and the Moon...<sup>12</sup>

When the Sun has been subjugated to man, then its servitude to his domicile Earth too is also established beyond reasonable doubt. It flows from it that the existence of the servant suns is pointless without that of the master earths. In principle, thus, wherever in the skies exist the suns, with them exist the earths too!! Basing on the generally comprehensible suns, a very powerful argument is being made here through these statements with regard to the existence with them of the concealed earths thus. That is to say that on the strength of the realities science could reasonably perceive, we are also being acquainted today with those that generally fall beyond its scope too.

The first Qur'anic confirmation of these rational contentions could be found in the very first verse of the current statement. The phrase 'the one who has created the earths' here is immediately being introduced, in an extremely eloquent and comprehensive manner, as 'the Lord of all the worlds.' This very bluntly suggests that the latter phrase has been substituted for the former. In other words, with the very mention of the creation of the earths, the formation of all the heavenly bodies mutually bound together under the law of gravitation is meant here. For the expression 'all the worlds' to mean all the natural phenomena in existence would be dealt with in detail in the coming pages. It, thus, shows that 'earth' has once again been used here as a generic noun.

Further corroboration in this regard could be found in the remaining verses as well. Accordingly, after the creation of all the earths, the Creator turned towards the skies that were in the state of smoke then. Remember, the 'sky' too is similarly appearing in its singular form as do the 'earth' to denote



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that both of them have been used as generic nouns. This is the reason why both of these genders have been addressed to in the dual form initially in the passage 'Both of you submit yourselves willingly or unwillingly.' But, in the very next verse, in an extremely marvelous fashion, each of them has been separated in its plural form as well; if the earths were indicated with the pronoun 'them,' the number 'seven' has been assigned to the skies. That is, when both the genre of the earths and the skies submitted themselves willingly before the Creator, he secured the former in the latter. Imagine once again that hadn't the earths been multiple in number, how could have they been secured in all the seven skies then? Razi too has inferred all the earths in existence here.

Moreover, the literal mention of the compulsory existence of the companion suns hitherto concealed deliberately by contenting with the creation in all the seven skies of the mere earths is significantly being revealed towards the end through the expression 'And we have adorned the nearest sky with a few lamps,' implying that the present discussion is being carried out in the context of virtually all the earths and their accompanying suns right from the very beginning itself and confirming the logical interpretation we have resorted to in this regard earlier. Also, notice the sagacious divergence of expression employed here; if a mention of only the earths in all the seven skies was made in the earlier part of these verses by concealing the existence of the suns, in the latter part, on the contrary, only the suns have been mentioned in the nearest sky, and the already established earths have been deliberately left out. This very clearly suggests that just like the Qur'an argues upon the certain existence of the earths with the simple mention of the accompanying moons, it also establishes direct correlation between the earths and the attendant suns with a mention merely of any one of the two. And 'lamps' here as well is appearing as a common noun devoid of the prefix *aliflam* indicating the suns and their companion earths are comparatively lesser in number than those present in the remaining six skies. This is why the wisdom behind the creation and dispersal of such a great number of earths in all the skies is being described in the end as 'Such is the estimation of the all-mighty and the all-knowing!'

It has also to be born in mind at this stage that the securing of the earths in the seven skies in two days also includes the transformation of the skies

from their earlier smoky state to the present one, as another statement makes an explicit assertion that the earths were disseminated only after the erection of the skies:

5) Are you more difficult to create or the skies that he built? He raised their roofs high, proportioned them, darkened their nights, brightened their days, and after that did he spread the earths out.<sup>13</sup>

Amid the creation of the skies and the spreading out of the earths, the passage 'darkened their nights, brightened their days' bears another testimony for us. Accordingly, the creation of the nights and days of the skies is in reality indicative of the creation of the suns in them, as without the latter the occurrence of the former just cannot be possible. Hence, creation of the suns prior to that of the earths too is quite obviously established. As such, the present verses are meant to elucidate and remove the apparent ambiguities contained in the previous statement and to strengthen and augment our contention there. The following verses too reinforce this fact even further:

6) The Almighty is he who has created seven skies, and likewise, the earths. *His* command descends among them (i.e., the earths) in order that you may know that he is capable of every thing, and that he encompasses everything knowledgeably.<sup>14</sup>

It is this verse that formed the historical basis for the many exegetes of the Qur'an to confine the multiplicity of the earths to seven. According to them, a similarity is being drawn here between the earths and the skies with the number seven. Had that been the case, however, a statement could have been made in a straightforward way that the Almighty has created seven skies and seven earths, and there wouldn't have been any necessity for generating the current ambiguity. In reality, however, here too the same caution and foresight are unmistakably at work which we are witnessing continuously with regard to the actual number of earths contained in all the seven skies. Thus, a careful consideration of the Qur'anic usage of the word 'skies' on other occasions reveals that just as all the seven skies and the other heavenly bodies present in them are referred to with the phrase 'the skies and the earths and all that exists in between' the same sense is also conveyed with the mere 'skies' too. Respective instances of both these usages are as follows:

6.1) He created the skies and the earths and all that exists in between in



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6.1) He created the skies and the earths and all that exists in between in



six days, and then ascended the Throne...<sup>15</sup>

6.2) Your Lord is the Almighty who created the skies and the earths in six days, and then ascended the Throne...<sup>16</sup>

In both of these mutually comparable verses, the six-day creation account discloses that a mention is being made in each of them concerning the creation of virtually all the natural phenomena in existence. Thus, if a broad classification of these phenomena is made then it would consist of three broad elements: seven skies, all the earths, and all the remaining heavenly bodies. The first of these verses just corresponds to this categorization, whereas the same meaning is being conveyed in the second verse with the mere mention of the skies and the earths, and the third element has completely been omitted deliberately. Hence, it could rightly be inferred from it that 'skies' is a comprehensive Qur'anic term that simply incorporates all the seven of them and all the stars and the other heavenly bodies present in them as well, and which is occasionally emphasized with the number 'seven' or with the phrase 'the skies and the earths and all that exists in between.' Likewise, its usage in the verse quoted in statement no. 4.2 above is another example, where all the heavenly bodies mutually bound together under the universal law of gravitation too have plainly been referred to as the 'skies.' Moreover, apart from these arguments, for the term 'sky' to connote all the bodies it consists of is a self-evident truth too. To mean the citizens with the mere mention of their respective countries of domicile is in practice in general. From the statements of 'India is a multi-religious country' or 'UK is a developed state' it is always meant that the religiosity or the development exist in their respective citizens and not in those countries per se.

Accordingly, the statement 'the Almighty is he who has created seven skies, and likewise, the earths' denotes that in the same way as the seven skies together with the other heavenly bodies and particularly the innumerable suns inhabiting them were created, earths too have been given similar abundant existence. Thus, if a correlation was established between the earths and the suns in all the seven skies in the statement no. 4 above, a similarity between them is also being drawn here in terms of their absolute numbers, reinforcing the contention that this latter statement is basically meant to refine and further define the former. In this manner, the actual comparison being made here in

the phrase 'and likewise, the earths' is between the earths and the seven skies, rather than merely the number seven.

As stated earlier, science is in the process of gathering considerable evidence upon the existence of many more invisible universes similar to the present visible one as well. As a result, the concept of multiverse has begun to gain ground today. However, as could be gathered from our present discussion, the Qur'an has already accorded a definite shape to this concept by unequivocally revealing their actual composition and their absolute number as well. All the heavenly bodies discovered so far by the modern astronomy are contained in just the nearest or the very first sky according to the Qur'an. The remaining six skies too carry galaxies, suns, moons, and earths in them and are invisible to us because all of them are placed one above the other. This quite clearly suggests that each one of them is a separate universe in itself. Modern astronomy too considers them to be beyond the pale of our observation and, thus, concealed from us.

Furthermore, another significant reality baring itself in the light of the present discussion is that the term 'earth' has generally been used in the Qur'an in its generic form, which is sometimes provided emphasis with *jamee* or a pronoun in its plural form is used to indicate it. It could, however, be contended here that the word 'skies' in its singularity is a comprehensive term to include all the earths as well, as our own earth too bears the same status in relation to the other earths. Even though such instances too are commonly found but it would be reflective of merely a partial reality of the Qur'an, as on many other occasions the plurality of the earths is sought with its mere mention in its singular form. Many of the instances referred previously do fall under this realm, and still more shall follow in due course. So, unless it specifically refers to just our own, 'earth' shall always be regarded in its generic form. Nevertheless, if it accompanies 'sky' or 'skies,' or is used in their context, then it shall always be considered to be conforming to the same usage. On quite a few occasions, however, the phrase 'the skies and the earth and all that exists in between' too has been used just to lay additional emphasis upon their plurality.

These are some of the verses conveying the plurality of the earths in direct and real expressions. There are many more that dwell upon the subject indirectly and figuratively, still. They shall be dealt with in due course. It



could reasonably be concluded from this discussion, thus, that the Qur'an always resorts to such vocabulary and expression in relation to describing the multiplicity of the earths that if on the one hand their true number remains obscure to the predecessors, on the other, when man is well set on the threshold of figuring that great reality out through his own instincts and in the light of his own knowledge, it should itself reveal to him extremely emphatically. The Qur'an declares the basic objective behind such a methodical and long-term approach in very clear terms as follows:

7) Soon shall we reveal to them our signs in the environs of the earth and the skies and in their own lives until it becomes manifest to them that this is the truth. Isn't it enough for your Lord to be witness over everything?<sup>17</sup>

Both according to the lexicon and the narration, the original Arabic word *a'faaq* used here denotes the environs of the earth and the skies. Thus, it is clearly evident from this verse that those of the signs of Providence contained in the environs of the earth and the skies and kept concealed from the predecessors just to be revealed to man at a later date are nothing but this very massive universe and particularly its countless earths themselves being disclosed in an amazing idiom to us currently. So, the Qur'an itself has provided an extremely significant authentication to this humble writer in aid of his present endeavor. And the phrase 'until it becomes manifest to them that this is the truth' explains the rationale behind it that this carefully crafted strategy of the concealment of the true expanse of the natural world and its delayed disclosure to man in the light of his own knowledge was resorted to in order to establish and demonstrate before him the marvelous and truthful nature of the Qur'an. This is the reason why it is again being asked if it wasn't enough for the Almighty to be witness over everything, indicating that all the natural phenomena fall quite within the Divine knowledge, and, thus, finding a mention in this amazing Book. And it is why it has been undertaken at another occasion to reveal these signs later on, asserting that they would be so clear or so complete in harmony with the knowledge of man that he would clearly discern them:

7.1) Say: "Praise belongs to the Almighty alone. Soon shall he reveal to you his signs, and you would certainly recognize them."<sup>18</sup>

## 2

## Celestial Intelligence

One may naturally wonder now as to the objective behind the creation of such incalculable number of earths all through the seven skies or the universes. It should particularly be noted that all the earths in existence have been dealt with uniformly in the Qur'an and nowhere does our earth find any distinctive or superlative status in relation to the other earths in it. Besides, this question assumes immense significance and dynamic proportions in view of the fact that their abundance was kept totally concealed from the predecessors just to be revealed in a sagacious and marvelous fashion in the contemporary period. We shall now explore the relevant Qur'anic statements and present them in a logical sequence, which shall itself lay bare the wisdom and prudence embedded in this carefully crafted strategy. At the outset, a couple of these statements proclaim thus:

8) We did not create the skies and the earths and that which exists in between pointlessly. That is the assumption of those who do not believe. So, woe unto the disbelievers from the fire.<sup>19</sup>

8.1) We did not create the skies and the earths and that which exists in between playfully.<sup>20</sup>

As has been amply established in the previous chapter, the term 'the skies and the earths and that which exists in between' occurring in both these verses encompasses all the seven skies and all the heavenly bodies contained in them, particularly the earths. These phenomena of nature carry a certain purpose



behind their creation, thus. That is, some well laid-out strategy is at work in the creation of not only our own earth but that of all the other celestial earths as well. And the statement 'That is the assumption of those who do not believe' conveys that to believe in the contrary or in the theory of spontaneous creation of the universe is just the hallmark of those who do not believe in their Creator. The following verse begins to expound the purpose behind their creation thus:

9) Among the signs of his *providence* is the creation of the skies and the earths and the *daabba* that he has scattered through them, and he is capable of gathering them whenever he wishes.<sup>21</sup>

Here too the phrase 'the skies and the earths' includes all the seven skies and all the earths contained in them. This verse, thus, very explicitly declares that all the celestial earths are dotted with *daabba*, an Arabic term for 'animals' and described elsewhere in the Qur'an in the following words:

9.1) The Almighty has created the *daabba* from water. Of them, one crawls on his belly, another walks with two legs, and yet another walks with four legs. The Almighty creates whatever he wishes...<sup>22</sup>

The *daabba* described here, thus, includes all the animals that either crawl on their bellies or walk on two or four legs. So, this Qur'anic description of the celestial animals generally corresponds to those of their terrestrial cousins including the two-legged animals 'humans' as well. Another argument in support of this contention is that all the pronouns appearing in both of these verses to indicate the *daabba* pertain to those of the intelligent beings alone. According to the Arabic syntax, when a particular noun involves both the intelligent and the non-intelligent beings, it is compulsorily dealt with reference to its former sense alone. And in order to buttress this argument even further, consider the following verse, which refers to humans as *daabba* very bluntly:

9.2) Indeed, the worst of the *daabba* in the sight of the Almighty are those *men* who do not repose faith, and, thus, do not believe.<sup>23</sup>

Moreover, many of the classical exegetes too consider the *daabba* to include humans in its ambit. The foremost among them being the noted Ibn Kathir, known particularly for his commentary based upon the holy narrations, who, basing upon the verse under discussion, argues upon the existence

of humans and angels throughout the length and breadth of the skies:

"Daabba includes angels, humans, and all the other animals with all the differences in their makeup, colours, dialects, traits, and species that the Creator has scattered in every nook and corner of the earth and the skies."

Also, Tabri and Suyuthi, both of them renowned for their narrative commentaries too, and Qurtubi have quoted the famous exegete Mujahid that it includes both humans and angels. According to Zamakhshari, Razi, Nasafi, Abu Hayyan etc., however, it denotes different types of animals that move around in the skies similar to the humans themselves.

It is very much obvious from this discussion that the existence of animal life in the skies had attained near unanimity between the predecessors of Islam since the earliest period itself. However, as their other related particulars remained obscure, some of the exegetes meant them to be the animals that resemble humans in their movement, while others, in view of the literal denotation of the term, directly included in them humans too. It will not be out of place to mention herein that at least seven earths were certainly established among all the earlier exegetes in the light of the chapter 65:12 of the Qur'an. But, none of them viewed these celestial creatures in the context of those exoplanets as well, resulting in the emergence of the difference of humans and human-like creatures. This was because, contrary to our present finding, the term 'skies and the earth' did not comprise the other earths then save for our very own. Thus, when both according to the lexicon and the narrations at least animal life is established in the heavens, we shall now explore the subject matter further in the light of the relevant Qur'anic statements and strive to figure out the other traits of these celestial creatures, which would very well do away with the difference of opinion on this score between the predecessors:

10) To the Almighty bows whosoever is in the skies and the earths from among the *daabba* and the angels, and they do not pride themselves.<sup>24</sup>

This verse directly conveys that the extraterrestrials too bow before the Almighty in the same way as the terrestrials do. This act of bowing, therefore, suggests that they possess intellect. Besides, the verse is classifying all the celestial beings into two broad heads: *daabba* and angles. This clearly demonstrates that angles are a separate entity quite distinct from the *daabba*,



and contradicts the notion of the earlier exegetes who considered the former under the previous statement to be from among the latter.

10.1) To Him glorify the seven skies and the earths and those present in them. There is nothing that doesn't chant his praise, but you don't comprehend their praise...<sup>25</sup>

10.2) To the Almighty belongs whosoever is in the skies and the earths in order that he repays those who do evil with what they do and reward those who do good with good.<sup>26</sup>

10.3) The Almighty has created the skies and the earths with a purpose, so that every person is rewarded with what he has earned, and they shall not be wronged.<sup>27</sup>

10.4) Don't you know that the kingdom of the skies and the earths belongs to the Almighty alone, who punishes whomsoever he wishes and forgives whomsoever he desires...<sup>28</sup>

It may be noted that all these four different statements speak in the context of all the earths of all the seven skies. If it is being conveyed in the first of them that all the celestial beings indulge in glorifying the Almighty, the remaining three of them reveal that the very objective behind the creation of all these earths is nothing but rewarding those who dwell in them consistent with their respective deeds. This very clearly suggests that there exist in all the celestial earths such creatures that could be held accountable for their good and bad acts and rewarded or punished accordingly. This aspect of the celestial *daabba* too further substantiates that it just cannot include angles in it, because being innocent creatures, they aren't liable to be punished. Thus, the celestial beings established so far are those that exclude angles, bow before their Lord, glorify and praise him, and, being accountable, are liable to be rewarded or punished.

Now the susceptibility of the celestial beings to reward or punishment gives rise to the logical question if the episodes of faith and faithlessness in God similar to the terrestrial ones are at work among the extraterrestrials too. The following verse just answers this precise question:

11) Had your Lord so wished, all those on all the earths would have certainly come to believe; can you coerce mankind to believe? No person can believe except by the will of the Almighty; he creates animosity in those who do

not use intellect. Say: "Observe what is there in the skies and the earths." *There too* the signs and the warners are of no avail to the people who do not believe.<sup>29</sup>

All the three verses of this statement are, by propounding the philosophy of the inability of the disbelievers to belief in a well-structured mode, very marvelously revealing a vital celestial reality. It could be gathered in the light of all the five different statements of the previous statement that in the very first verse of the present statement the original Arabic words *kul* and *jamee*, both used here simultaneously to denote 'all,' are emphasizing and pluralizing two different words — 'those' and 'earth.' We have already come across one instance of the usage of the latter word in statement number one. Many more of its kind would also follow in due course. It is very much evident from this verse, therefore, that such alien beings certainly exist in every earth of all the seven skies that are endowed with both the qualities of belief and disbelief in God. It is in further corroboration of this assertion that the terrestrial disbelievers are being commanded in the last verse through 'Observe what is there in the skies and the earths,' and a broad hint is being given to them through the expression 'the signs and the warners are of no avail to the people who do not believe' that their inability to repose faith in God and not heeding to his messengers and their messages is not at all unique to them alone, but it is an universal phenomenon and common to their tribe wherever they are to be found on all the other earths as well.

As such, it is very much evident that prophethood is also an ongoing phenomenon in the heavens too. This clearly demonstrates that this last verse is basically meant to elucidate and explain the apparent ambiguity found in the first one concerning the earths in their plural form. Note further that a resemblance is being drawn here between the terrestrial disbelievers and their extraterrestrial counterparts, and the entire narration is being made in the context of such meaningful terms as 'mankind,' 'person,' and 'people.'

Consider now the following verse where the terrestrial people are being dispensed with in lieu of the extraterrestrials:

11.1) O Mankind, the messenger has, indeed, come to you from your Lord with the truth, so believe for your own good. If you disbelieve then the Almighty has for him whosoever is in the skies and the earths, and he is



all-knowing and all-wise.<sup>30</sup>

The original Arabic word *ma* appearing in this verse is a relative pronoun and is used in relation to both the intelligent and non-intelligent beings. It has been used in the following verse in relation to the Almighty as well:

11.2) Nor do you worship whom (*ma*) do I.<sup>31</sup>

We have, thus, adopted this former usage and translated it as 'whosoever.' Now, when the extraterrestrial beings too are accountable for their deeds and have been bestowed with both the attributes of belief and disbelief in God along the lines of the terrestrials, it could reasonably be inferred from it that the episodes of retribution and elimination of the disbelievers are continuously at work there too. The following three statements are, quite in tandem, portraying this very reality in a universal perspective and in an exemplary style:

12) How many a wrongful habitation did we destroy and originate other races after them! So, when they sensed our punishment, they started to flee from there all of a sudden. *We said unto them*, 'Don't flee, return to your objects of pleasure and your dwellings in order that you may be quizzed.' They said, 'Woe to us! Indeed, we were wrongful.' So, they were in that constant cry until we cut them down and reduced them to ashes. *After all* we did not create the skies and the earths and that which exists in between playfully. Had we wished to indulge in fun, we could definitely have taken to it from among ourselves, if at all we had to do so.<sup>32</sup>

It may be observed from the passage 'So, they were in that constant cry until we cut them down and reduced them to ashes' here that a whole host of habitations have been meted out in the past with identical sets of punishment, whereas the fact of the matter remains that each and every errant nation of the terrestrial people has been punished in a unique fashion, and no two of them bear any resemblance between them in their respective retributions. If the people of Prophet Noah (pbuh), for instance, were flooded, than those of the Prophets Hud, Saleh, Lot, and Mosses (pbuh) were annihilated with a blast, wind, stony rain, and drowning respectively, and neither they nor any one other than them has been burnt up and reduced to ashes ever. This implies that the present narration cannot be said to be with reference to the terrestrials. Besides, consider now the last two verses, which are reinforcing this

contention even more compellingly and convincingly. After the creation and destruction of a great number of habitations with just a solitary type of retribution, such a passionate statement as '*After all* we did not create the skies and the earths and that which exists in between playfully. Had we wished to indulge in fun, we could definitely have taken to it from among ourselves' unmistakably conveys the message that a narration is indeed being made here in the celestial context alone. We shall discuss this punishment of the reduction of nations into ashes permeating all through the heavens in detail in the subsequent chapter.

So far as the Arabic term *qar'yah*, which we have translated here as 'habitation,' is concerned, if it is used in relation to our own earth, then it is very much obvious that it pertains to any of its various places of dwelling, like villages, towns, cities, provinces etc. And at a time when extraterrestrial earths and living beings inhabiting them too have been established, if it is used in their context as well then for it in its wider application to mean any of the earths as a whole is a self-evident truth too. Remember, the Earth, let alone the seven skies and the innumerable galaxies therein, doesn't rank in comparison to the Galaxy that even one of its own least significant habitats does in relation to itself. Those who are used to the concept of 'global village' in today's information age shouldn't be amazed by this Qur'anic term. When man with his limited senses and partial knowledge could get to this precise reality then what could be said about the Supreme Being? It is amply evident now that the extraterrestrial earths are metaphorically being referred to as 'habitations' here. This Qur'anic term is, thus, a lifelike image of a prophetic saying that the words of the Scripture are multifaceted in nature. In the previous chapter we had stated that the Qur'an dwells upon the plurality of the earths employing figurative expressions too. The current one, thus, is the first instance from this usage. The following is yet another, which further corroborates the current statement thus:

13) How many a habitation did defy the command of their Lord and his messengers! So, we brought them to a severe account and punished them with a punishment unfamiliar to *mankind*. So they tasted the ill-consequence of their deeds, and the end result of their conduct was loss. The Almighty has prepared for them a severe punishment *too*. So, O men of wisdom, those who believe, fear the Almighty; he has, indeed, sent



down to you a reminder. *And a messenger as well*, who recites to you the Very Clear Signs of the Almighty that he may deliver the believers and the righteous people out of the darkness into the light. Those who believe in the Almighty and perform the righteous deeds, he shall cause them to enter the Gardens under which flow the rivers and wherein they reside forever. The Almighty has, indeed, made an excellent provision for them. The Almighty is he who has created seven skies, and likewise the earths. *His* command descends among them (i.e., the earths) in order that you may know that he is capable of every thing, and that he encompasses everything knowledgeably.<sup>33</sup>

Our discussion with respect to statement no. 6, which forms part of the present statement too, should also be kept in mind here. Observe now the similarity of expression employed here between both the current statement and the preceding one. Both of them speak in similar terms about the countless number of habitations having been destroyed on account of their sinful character. And in contention of this account of creation and devastation to be on a universal scale, if it was asserted in the previous statement that the skies and the earths and that which exists between them were not created out of fun, in the present one the creation of seven skies and infinite number of earths in them and the constant descent of the Divine command in them is being affirmed. This clearly proves that both of these latter phrases are mutually interpreting each other. Besides, in further corroboration of our present line of reasoning, the earlier unique punishment of the reduction of these nations into ashes pervading right through the skies is being referred to here as 'an unfamiliar punishment,' denoting that it doesn't bear any precedence to the present human race. Also, our argument in support of the existence of infinite number of earths in the skies basing upon the phrase 'and likewise the earths' contained in the statement no. 6 above, is being augmented by the phrase 'How many a habitation' here. Thus, if this latter phrase is revealing the infinite number concealed in the former phrase, the former phrase itself is quite descriptive of the true import of the latter. In addition, it can also be noticed that the Qur'an brings out two distinct words simultaneously to indicate the same thing: 'earth' in its literal denotation, and 'habitation' in its figurative sense. This distinctive style of the Book is indeed profoundly rooted in its contemporary intellectual marvel. Many more of its

type would be brought out in the ensuing pages too. The following statement underlines this aspect even further:

14) Whosoever is in the skies and the earths shall appear before the Merciful as a servant. Indeed, he has surrounded them and counted them thoroughly. Each one of them shall come before him on the Day of Judgment all alone. Those who believe and perform the righteous deeds, the Merciful shall definitely cause love to them. Indeed, we have simplified this *Qur'an* in your own language in order that you may bear glad tidings to the god-fearing and caution thereby the quarrelsome people. How many a race have we destroyed before them; do you perceive any one of them or even hear any of their faint voices?<sup>34</sup>

It may reasonably be gathered from this statement that, quite on the lines of both the previous two statements, an extremely coherent and a moving depiction of the creation and devastation of living beings is being made in the celestial context here too. So, after asserting in the first verse the assembling together of all the celestial beings on the Day of Judgment, it is being affirmed in the second one that the Almighty has comprehended them and counted them thoroughly. Thus, in this backdrop, it could be deduced from this latter phrase 'counted them thoroughly' as to how crowded the skies are with the exoplanets and the civilizations flourishing therein, whereas the former phrase 'he has surrounded them' is indicative of the sheer size of the universe and the existence of alien civilizations in its every nook and corner. After continuing to engage with these extraterrestrials in the next two verses as well, the verse following them and concerning the god-fearing and quarrelsome people has been deliberately advanced to serve as a parenthetical expression in the midst of this well-ordered discussion so as to generate a degree of ambiguity and ensure that its true import is not revealed prematurely. When such enormous care and foresight were at work in the previous chapter in the mere mention of the earths, then it is logical to expect the same or even greater measure of caution with reference to the disclosure of civilizations inhabiting them. Then the last verse enlightens us through 'How many a race have we destroyed before them' that innumerable races inhabiting the celestial earths earlier to the present ones have been annihilated. It should be remembered that the pronoun 'them' here is compulsorily indicating the same extraterrestrials continuously being discussed all through the first four verses of this state-



ment, rather than the terrestrials mentioned in the subsequent parenthetical verse. Another argument in support of this contention is the concluding phrase 'do you perceive any one of them or even hear any of their faint voices?' as only those of the beings could be perceived or their faint voices be heard who are alive, and not the ones punished and perished long before. And these living creatures cannot be said to be the terrestrials as they all fall under our direct observation. They can only be the present extraterrestrials, thus.

It should be born in mind here that the original Arabic word *qarn*, which we have translated here as 'race,' literally means 'people of an epoch.' Now if it is used in relation to the present human race, then it would refer to any of its present or extinct people, like the people of the Prophet Noah, the people of the Prophet Abraham, the people of the Prophet Moses (pbut) etc. etc. And when used in the celestial context, like the present one, it is very much obvious that it refers to all the intelligent beings of any given earth in the same way as 'habitation' broadens to signify an entire planet in similar circumstances. This is because in a universe as old as 10 to 20 billion years, intelligent beings finding existence on any of its terrestrial planets for just a few thousand years are too meager and despicable an example of the term 'people of an epoch.' In this respect, the whole of the terrestrial people, existent merely for the past six to eight thousand years, are a race in a universal setting. There are numerous instances of both these usages in the Qur'an. We shall try and explore some more of them in due course.

So, in this context of celestial civilizations, the concluding expression 'Do you perceive any one of them or even hear any of their faint voices?' bears another extremely significant and stunning scientific insight for us. As stated in the previous chapter, modern astronomy is quite precisely engaged only in these two types of endeavors in its search for the extraterrestrial intelligence either by sending probes in deep space in order to hunt down the prospective alien civilizations physically or by striving relentlessly to trap and listen to the probable artificial radio signals emitted by them in their search of their own extraterrestrials. And these radio signals are nothing but the extremely faint voices transmitted in the radio band of the electromagnetic spectrum. It is, thus, amazingly evident that the present Qur'anic statement of the faint voices of the extraterrestrials are nothing but the same radio signals emitted by them

to their own extraterrestrials including us! Man is, thus, being quizzed that though he was able to amass such compelling scientific evidence concerning the existence of innumerable exoplanets and technological civilizations thriving therein merely in his own neighborhood but did he succeed in tracking any of them down physically or at least in listening to any of their radio signals even after such vigorous and persistent search. Hence, it could be seen as to how stunning the manner in which the entire effort of the modern astronomy has been condensed into a very brief and exceptionally meaningful phrase. It should be borne in mind at this point of time that the Qur'an merely offers broad hints in relation to the phenomena of nature so that their true import is directly and categorically revealed to both the learned and the ordinary people alike only upon the establishment of that precise fact on the scientific plane. Had the Almighty coined a term himself to describe these radio signals, for instance, then it, being from the one who has brought them into existence and knowing the ultimate reality embedded in them, would definitely have been the most comprehensive one and fallen high above the level of human comprehension. He has described them with recourse to their most fundamental and easily comprehensible characteristic of 'faint voices' thus.

Furthermore, with the mention of the probability of hearing the radio signals transmitted by the extraterrestrials, the Qur'an is attributing to them yet another feature over those already established earlier that they are technologically on par with or even superior to their terrestrial cousins. This is because their mere possession of this medium of interstellar communications is significantly indicative of their scientific and technological advancement, as is the case with us as well. We too are able to master it for merely the past five decades and only after centuries of sustained scientific and technological advancement. One can now ponder as to how rightly convinced the modern astronomy is through indirect scientific evidence concerning the existence in abundance of alien technological civilizations all around us and as to how realistic and justifiable its sustained endeavors are in establishing communication with them, though it has failed miserably in detecting even a single microbe – live or dead – beyond the Earth. The following statement substantiates the present one even further:

15) Say: "None in the skies and the earths other than the Almighty has the knowledge of the unseen, nor do they realize as to when they would be



raised again." Nevertheless, their knowledge has got to *the truth of the Last Day*; they are in doubt of it, rather; they are blind to it, instead.<sup>35</sup>

It could be gathered from these verses too as to how scientifically advanced the celestial beings are. Remember once again, the phrase 'none in the skies and the earths' includes us too. So, these verses unequivocally declare that all the beings, even if they don't possess the knowledge of the Resurrection, are so developed and scientifically well-advanced that they definitely have attained the knowledge of its inevitable occurrence based upon their own sciences. It can be pondered here whether the conduct of the terrestrials too is any different from the statement 'they are in doubt of it, rather; they are blind to it, instead.'

All the characteristics of the extraterrestrials uncovered so far are, thus, quite exactly the same as those of the terrestrial humans themselves. So, can it safely be inferred from such varied evidence that all the celestial beings are humans themselves, and whether those of the exegetes who considered the celestial *daabba* to include in its ambit them as well succeeded in comprehending this great reality then itself? The following statement just answers this question quite comprehensively and convincingly:

16) Whosoever is in the skies and the earths implores Him, who engages himself all the time. Which of the bounties of your Lord will both of you deny then? O you both the classes, soon shall we free ourselves for you! Which of the bounties of your Lord will both of you deny then? O the tribes of jinn and men, if you are able to escape from the bounds of the skies and the earths, do escape; but you cannot escape without an enormous power. Which of the bounties of your Lord will both of you deny then? *Remember, if you attempt to escape ever*, let loose at you will be a flame of fire and smoke, then you will not be able to defend yourselves. Which of the bounties of your Lord will both of you deny then? And when the skies are split asunder...<sup>36</sup>

The phrase 'the skies and the earths' appears twice in succession here, which lays additional emphasis upon the fact that the entire conversation in this passage is being carried out in the celestial context alone. And as the events of the Hereafter are being commenced with the last phrase 'when the skies are split asunder' it unmistakably reveals that all the preceding verses

of this statement pertain only to the worldly affairs. So, the first of these verses informs us about the existence of living beings all through the skies and the earths. Apparently, the identity of these celestial beings seems to have been kept concealed from us. In the very next verse (O you both the classes...), however, in a dramatic change of address from the third to the second person, men and jinn are being addressed to directly, implying very subtly that these celestial beings are none other than them alone. But the Qur'an, rather than taking comfort in mere implications, goes another step forward and addresses them in the subsequent verse directly and calls upon them, if they are able to, to escape from the bounds of the skies and the earths too. It could now be pondered if men and jinn aren't to be found inhabiting the heavens, then how could have they been invited to escape from their confines as well? It is, thus, very much obvious that the same strategy of initial concealment and marvelous disclosure in the very next breath, witnessed to in the previous chapter concerning the extraterrestrial earths, is at work here with regard to the existence therein of humans too.

The classical exegetes, however, due to the lack in their respective times of the evidence of the exoplanets and the extraterrestrial beings inhabiting them, were constrained to consider this latter verse in total isolation of its immensely coherent context and, as a result, were left with no other alternative except for presuming this Divine address to be concerned with the Day of Resurrection. Moreover, in this assumption too they only had our singular earth before them, and virtually the entire universe remained beyond the pale of their comprehension. Nevertheless, their interpretation could not be said to have been founded on sound footing even in their own times, as the last phrase of this address 'but you can't escape without an enormous power' unmistakably affirms that both men and jinn could escape from the bounds of the earths and the skies with the help of an enormous power, whereas this is just not possible for them on the Day of Resurrection. As a matter of fact, man has with the help of some extremely powerful rockets – the lifelike image of 'enormous power' – escaped and re-entered the bounds of the Earth several times in the contemporary period and is constantly affirming this Divine call. Moreover, there are many exegetes who have considered this address to be worldly in nature too. The most notable among them being the Tabri, Razi, Baizawi, Baghwi, Qurtubi, Aaloosi etc. Razi, in particular, has preferred this



interpretation. In reality, the present verse, quite in tandem with the subsequent one, bears a very deep-rooted relevance to the present space age and is revealing a vital celestial phenomenon in an amazing idiom, which shall be dealt upon elaborately in the subsequent chapter. At this point of time, however, it has to be born in mind that it is not at all intended here to address all the extraterrestrial men and jinn through the present verse, but, in reality, it is merely meant to convey the fact of their prevalence all through the universe in a marvelous fashion.

Consider now a couple of narrations of Ibn Abbas (ra), the notable companion of the holy Prophet (pbuh), reported by Tabri and Ibn Kathir in their respective commentaries under chapter 65:12 of the Qur'an, which are quite in agreement with the conclusions we have arrived at here:

*"Every earth has an Abraham and the likes of the terrestrial creatures."*

*"Seven earths, each of them has a prophet similar to your own, an Adam similar to Adam, a Noah similar to Noah, an Abraham similar to Abraham, and a Jesus similar to Jesus."*

This amply demonstrates that our present discussion and the inferred extraterrestrial realities are not all new to the predecessors in their entirety. As a matter of fact, Ibn Abbas was able to comprehend this great reality in principle, whose finer points we are familiarizing ourselves with in the light of the Qur'an itself today. Remember, the same commentators have reported another of his narrations under the same chapter, which sheds sufficient light upon their gifted nature as well:

*"If I were to interpret this verse correctly then you would definitely disbelieve it; your disbelief would be you falsifying it."*

This suggests that Ibn Abbas was in the know of many more realities of the heavens. He, however, decided firmly against revealing them in view of certain misgivings and also the level of intellectual awareness prevailing particularly among the masses. It could be pondered as to how could such unscientific period as that of the seventh century, which he belonged to, be congenial to accommodating such strange intellectual realities when the scientific fraternity itself is still balking at affirming anything resolutely in this regard even in this advanced twenty-first century. Note further that apart from the masses, even the Islamic researcher and the compilers of the holy narrations too were compelled to develop second thoughts concerning their

authenticity, and, hence, they neither accorded much importance to them nor indulged with them intellectually. Moreover, though Ibn Abbas considered just seven earths basing his argument upon the similar number of skies as described in statement no. 6, but our discussion in the previous chapter has conclusively established innumerable earths in each of the seven skies. So, the number of terrestrial planets and the human civilizations thriving therein could very well be determined from the following verse too:

17) The skies are close to splitting asunder *due to the weight* from above them, whereas the angels sing the praise of their Lord and ask forgiveness for those on the earths...<sup>37</sup>

This Qur'anic statement concerns all the seven skies and all the earths contained in them for the reason that 'earth,' as argued upon in statement no. 6 above, is appearing in the context of 'skies' here. And, as established in the same statement, even the singular term 'skies' is so comprehensive in its denotation that it simply incorporates all the seven of them and the other bodies present in them too. As such, a subtle and a very meaningful indication could be found in the expression 'The skies are close to splitting asunder from above them' that this condition accrues to them only due to the weight of civilizations flourishing on them. This is the reason why the skies are deliberately and contrarily stated to split from above them despite the fact that if at all they were to rupture, this act of rupturing commences only from beneath them. It could further be noticed here too, in line with the previous statement, that the Qur'an doesn't just stop at mere implications, but it directly proceeds to reveal these extraterrestrial civilizations in the very next phrase 'whereas the angels sing the praise of their Lord and ask forgiveness for those on the earths' in very clear terms.

The classical exegetes, however, as the true nature of these extraterrestrials remained masked from them, considered this weight to be that of the angels. Note further that statement no. 9, which established the existence of *daabba* throughout the skies and the earths, pertained to the middle of the current chapter 42 of the Qur'an, whereas the statement under discussion belongs to its beginning. This sheds further light upon the true import of the current statement. It could, thus, be pondered from the varied Qur'anic statements concerning the multiplicity of the earths in the first chapter and the



present assertion of the skies having got close to splitting asunder due to the weight from above them as to how great the number of exoplanets and the human civilizations flourishing therein be all through the seven skies.

It is, thus, convincingly established that there exists innumerable terrestrial planets in all the seven skies; all of them have specifically been created in order that jinn and men are tested in them; the cycle of creation and destruction is in full swing in each and every of the planets; and ancient civilizations are being obliterated due to their own conduct and newer ones are replacing them regularly. In the next chapter, therefore, an attempt shall be made to dwell further upon this exemplary and dazzling philosophy of creation and destruction on a universal scale and uncover an awesome natural reality concerning all the earths, which shall further corroborate the conclusions arrived at in both of these chapters.

### 3 Reality of the Earths

The Qur'an makes a startling disclosure concerning all the earths in existence together with our own in the following words:

18) Indeed, in the creation of the skies and the earths, in the alternation of the night and the day, in the ships that sail in the sea with that which benefits people, in the water which the Almighty rained from the skies and revived the earths therewith after their death and scattered all kinds of animals in them, in the changing of the winds, and in the submissive clouds between the skies and the earths, are signs for the wise people.<sup>38</sup>

It is very much clear in the light of our previous discussion that here too the entire discussion is being carried out in the context of all the seven skies and all the earths contained in them in their generic forms. A total of six signs or arguments of the divine providence have been enumerated here, the fourth of them being: 'in the water which the Almighty rained from the skies and revived the earths therewith after their death and scattered all kinds of animals in them.'

The fact of the customary revival of different barren regions of the Earth with rainwater is mentioned at many places in the Qur'an in the present tense. In the current verse, however, it has appeared in the past tense in a very meaningful way. Secondly, in a stunning change of expression, the natural outcome resulting from this act has also been appended to it very meaningfully through the phrase 'and scattered all kinds of animals in them.'



Moreover, the great reality of the term 'earth' appearing in its generic form. It could, thus, be inferred from these remarkable realities that the current sign of providence cannot be the one that is in our day-to-day observation. But, as a matter of fact, it is intended to convey the far-reaching reality concerning the whole of the natural world that virtually all the earths, including our own too, remained virtually dead or biologically inactive previously, after which they have been activated and brought back to life with a sort of rainwater, and that all the living beings were given existence and scattered in them only thereafter!

Indeed, the Qur'an has, in the course of just an ordinary talk, been able to uncover a great celestial and geological reality the modern science is yet to figure out. On the basis of some compelling scientific evidence, however, speculations are rife concerning at least the Earth as to whether it was struck with any life sterilizing events in its geological past similar to the one occurring 65 millions years ago and resulting in the mass extinction of the dinosaurs and many other species, due to which the life cycle might have restarted over its surface several times just to be wiped out later due to certain unfavorable conditions. But, the Qur'an is, in very unambiguous terms, declaring that prior to their present live phases, not only the Earth but virtually all the other celestial earths too had been in the condition of death, which were revived sometime in the past and all the living beings were given existence on them only thereafter. This clearly suggests that all the living beings (*daabba*), and particularly the humans, have come into existence consequent to the present live phase of the Earth.

This reality, in turn, gives rise to the inevitable question as to the condition of the earths prior to their previous state of death, as death accrues only to those that were alive before. Lifeless beings cannot be termed dead. It is too obvious even from the present phrase 'after their death' that the earths had met with death in the state of life. This establishes another round of liveliness for all the earths prior to their previous death. And, as the current statement is quite open, if this logic is carried back even further, then multiple number of lives and deaths of each and every earth including that of our own would certainly be established. Now, when all the living beings have been brought into being on all the earths consequent to their current live phases, it flows from it that they must have been given similar existence on them in their

previous live phases as well, just to be wiped out as a result of their own respective deaths. The following verse just conveys this very reality with recourse to a different expression:

19) Don't they observe as to how does the Almighty begin the creation and then repeat it? Indeed, it is easy for him. Say: "Move around on the Earth and observe as to how he began the creation..."<sup>39</sup>

Linguistically, the original Arabic word *al-qalq* is a verbal noun denoting creation, creatures, or man all alike. All these three meanings find their respective usages in the Qur'an itself:

19.1) Among his signs is the creation (*al-qalq*) of the skies and the earths...<sup>40</sup>

19.2) These are the creatures (*al-qalq*) of the Almighty, show me, then, as to what have those other than him created...<sup>41</sup>

19.3) Indeed, he begins *the creation of man* (*al-qalq*) and then repeats it, so that he judiciously reward those who believe and perform good deeds...<sup>42</sup>

The verse under discussion is very much inclusive in its scope of all these three denotations, as the essence of each one of them is one and the same. Obviously, the first and the second meanings are complementary to each other; here the act of creation commences, there the creatures begin to emerge and take shape. And in relation to these two meanings the third one too is well harmonizing, which shall be dealt with in detail in the next chapter. For the present, however, we shall abide by only the first of them. Besides, the Arabic word *bada'a* signifies initiating something, and it has been used in the same sense here too. We find another example of this usage in the following verse too:

19.4) ... He began (*bada'a*) the creation of man out of clay.<sup>43</sup>

Furthermore, the pronoun 'it' in the phrase 'then repeat it' is indicating the beginning of the creation. So, in view of the literal denotation of these words and the rightful designation of the pronoun, it becomes abundantly clear that man is being invited here through the passage 'Don't they observe as to how does the Almighty begin the creation and then repeat it' to ponder



over the acts of repeated creations afresh. This also suggests that this passage doesn't pertain to the life of the Hereafter, as creation is not repeated afresh then, but the living beings are merely raised all at once from their graves. The Qur'an is pretty clear on this score:

19.5) When the trumpet is sounded, they shall rush from the graves towards their Lord all of a sudden.<sup>44</sup>

It could, thus, fairly be concluded from this discussion that just as the multiple lives and deaths of all the celestial earths were revealed in the previous statement, information is being given in the present one concerning the commencement of the act of creation afresh or the resetting of the biological clock anew in each of their live phases. This is the reason why it is being encouraged, as evidence, in the very next breath through the passage 'Move around on the Earth and observe as to how he began the creation' to ponder over the manner in which the current live phase has started on our own Earth. It also flows from this statement that life and all its manifestations as they exist on the Earth today didn't emerge all together and all of a sudden, but they all had a beginning. A probability does exist here that the actual invitation to ponder might concern the physical aspect of creation. This latter passage, however, effectively excludes it, as the information obtained by moving around on the Earth or the internal evidence might suffice to arrive at the origin of biology rather than that of the physics, for which the reliance is essentially on the external one.

It also stems from this invitation that man could get to this universal reality fairly accurately through his own knowledge and his natural instincts, as he would not have been given this call, otherwise. Remember, the invitation to ponder over the repeated initiation of creation is being extended through the term 'observe,' even though it is not at all in the ambit of the human eyesight. It implies, hence, that the actual invitation is concerned with the intellectual and argumentative insight, rather than the plain eyesight. Thus, man has, in the right spirit of this call, begun to explore some of the terrestrial planets of our solar system and gather empirical evidence in support of the likely onset of these live and dead phases on them too. And this discussion is in a ripe stage in the context of our own earth as well.

Now, when all the earths of the universe have passed through multiple

bouts of lives similar to the present terrestrial one, and the biological clock has continued to be reset in each one of them repeatedly, a pertinent question arises as to the objective behind those creations too. Had some intelligent and responsible creatures given existence in them as well similar to the present jinn and men? The following verses, while further interpreting the present ones, are answering this precise question in the context of our own Earth, upon which the other earths could also be presumed:

20) Haven't they moved around on the Earth and observed as to how was the end of those before them? They were more powerful than them, ploughed the Earth, inhabited it more than they have inhabited, and their messengers had come to them with clear signs. It was not for the Almighty to wrong them, but they used to wrong themselves. Then evil was the end of the evildoers, because they falsified the signs of the Almighty and used to ridicule them. *Remember*, the Almighty begins the creation, then repeats it, and then to him shall you be made to return.<sup>45</sup>

If man was informed, in the previous statement, of the acts of repeated creations afresh and was asked to move around on our own Earth and explore the origin of the current phase of creation on it, he is being called upon in the present one, with recourse to the same phraseology, to observe the sad ending of those given existence in the previous phases. It is to reinforce this message even further that the statement 'the Almighty begins the creation, then repeats it' is once again being reiterated at the end. This uniformity of expression once again signifies the consistency of the denotation.

The previous creatures of the Earth, thus, were those who also cultivated it and were more powerful and numerically greater than our own selves. Besides, the tradition of prophethood and revelation of scriptures too was effective between them, whose falsification earned them the divine wrath and resulted in their ultimate decimation. This greatly establishes that the onset and culmination of the live phases of the earths are premeditated acts for the respective creation and elimination of intelligent and responsible creatures in them. And the passage 'Haven't they moved around on the Earth and observed as to how was the end of those before them?' suggests that similar to the present live phase of the Earth and its origin, man could also intellectually comprehend its earlier phases and the decimation of those



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inhabiting them too. The following statement too interprets and sheds more light upon both the present and the previous statements in the following words:

21) Haven't they observed as to how many a race have we destroyed before them, which do not return towards themselves? None among them is such that which is not presented before us. One of the signs of their *destruction* is the dead Earth, which we have revived and produced from it grains that they eat.<sup>46</sup>

One could see as to how explicit these verses are in asserting all the previous dead phases of the Earth to be the sign of the death and destruction of the races themselves given existence in them, which absolves us of any further interpretation in this regard. Thus, in further corroboration of the statement no. 18, multiple lives and deaths of the Earth are once again established here too. This yet again conveys the reality that each of the live phases of the Earth ushers in its wake a new race just to be culminated with the eventual extermination of its inhabitants themselves. It should also be born in mind here that under statement no. 14 we had interpreted the term 'race' in the celestial context to mean and include the entire inhabitants of any given earth. Now, this definition could further be refined and perfected to mean, when used in the context of the different live phases of just a single earth, all the inhabitants given existence in any of those phases. The present statement is consistent with this very usage. The following two statements further corroborate this interpretation of 'race' and also reinforce the present statement too:

22) Didn't they learn from the many races that we have destroyed before them in whose dwellings they *now* move around? There are, indeed, many a signs in it for the intelligent ones. Hadn't a word and a fixed term of *destruction* predestined from your Lord, it would have befallen *them too* necessarily.<sup>47</sup>

It can easily be gathered from the current passage that the address is general in nature wherein the whole of humanity has been addressed. As such, this address suggests that the former races in whose dwellings we move around today are nothing but those given existence in the previous live phases of the Earth, to be destroyed ultimately with their own culmination. This is

the reason why the present humanity too is being cautioned in the very next verse that it may also face the same eventuality on an appointed day.

23) Indeed, we have destroyed many a race before you when they wronged. Their prophets had brought clear signs unto them, yet they couldn't believe. Thus do we recompense the wrongdoers. Thereafter (i.e., after a period of time) we made you the successors on the Earth so as to see as to how do you fare.<sup>48</sup>

It is very much obvious that the address here too, in line with the previous statement, concerns humanity in general. Thus, the statement of the present human race moving around on the Earth and inhabiting its current live phase in the very dwellings of the previous races as stated in the previous statement is further being expounded here that it is only a while after the total elimination of the latter that the former has been made to succeed them. This is because the original Arabic particle *thumma* used here to denote 'thereafter' indicates sequence of two events as well as existence of time interval between them. The ensuing discussion shall convincingly establish considerable period of time between any two given races of any of the earths. Modern astronomy too could shed more light upon this providential phenomenon. The following two more statements also substantiate the fact of the previous inhabitants of the Earth even further:

24) O mankind, worship your Lord who has created you and those who were before you too...<sup>49</sup>

25) Didn't those who succeeded the Earth after its inhabitants realize that we could have, had we wished, afflicted them too for their sins...<sup>50</sup>

Both these two statements are so obvious in their true import that they too exempt us from any further elucidation. It has to be remembered at this point of time, however, that as the other related details of these earlier terrestrial races remained shrouded in mystery, the predecessor exegetes were constrained to consider them to be the previous extinct nations of the current human race. But, today we do not face any of such inhibitions. Thus, all these verses are fairly clearly uncovering the different features of the many races given periodic existence on the Earth even before us. It is also a fact, however, that the Qur'an always resorts to meaningful insinuations and implications, rather than direct narration concerning these earlier races of the Earth and



their true identity. But, viewed in the context of the previous chapter wherein all the seven skies and all the earths contained in them have exclusively been created for testing men and jinn in them and the fact that no creature other than them has ever been mentioned in it, one could safely apply this broad principle in relation to the terrestrial pre-human races as well and equate them directly to those of the men and jinn themselves. Moreover, the statement nos. 21-23 consider the present human beings too to be merely a race similar to the earlier ones. This is the reason why the Qur'an maintains an enigmatic silence concerning their real identity. Now, basing ourselves upon these foundations and seeking permission from the learned readers, we shall directly relate these terrestrial pre-human races to be those of the men and jinn themselves. Our forthcoming discussion shall, however, thoroughly convince them that their momentary consent hasn't gone in vain by any means. Thus, when so many human races similar to our own current one are being established on the Earth, then their total number in all the other celestial earths and their live phases as well could easily be presumed upon.

It is entirely logical now for a question to arise as to the meaning of the lives and the deaths of the earths that usher in changes of such colossal proportions in their wake. In finding an answer to this significant question, we shall begin with the lives and the deaths of our own earth and then draw general conclusions concerning those of the rest of them. So, when, according to statement no. 18, all the celestial earths together with our own have been brought to life from their respective deaths through rainwater, it flows from it that water was lacking on them in those dead phases. It also emanates from it that prior to those dead phases water was present on them in the preceding live ones. It can, thus, be inferred from it that whenever in the past the earths were bestowed with life, water was present on them just to be drained off consequent to their respective deaths. In other words, water finds itself on the earths in their live phases, and dries out in the dead ones. The Qur'an categorically states that all the creatures of all the seven skies have been created out of water:

26) Don't the disbelievers observe that the skies and the earths were bound together before we split them, and from water we made every living thing? Will they not believe then?<sup>51</sup>

It is obvious that here too the phrase 'the skies and the earths' includes all the seven skies and all the earths contained in them. Hence, 'every living thing' in this context denotes all the creatures of the entire universe. As such, all the living beings of the universe, whether they belong to the realms of botany or zoology or even the earths themselves, have been created out of water. We shall now carry forward this philosophy of creation and destruction to discern as to what might be in store for our live Earth in the future; is the all-encompassing and all-annihilating Doomsday in the offing or a customary dead phase shall once again overwhelm it resulting in the drying up of all the water and the eventual extinction of all life forms from its surface? The following two statements too strengthen our present line of reasoning even further:

27) Say: "The Compassionate extends the life of those who have gone astray until they see for themselves what they are warned with: either the punishment or the Doomsday..."<sup>52</sup>

27.1) Say: "Tell me, if you are truthful, when the punishment of the Almighty should overwhelm you or the Doomsday befall you, will you call anyone other than him?"<sup>53</sup>

It is very much obvious that humanity has generally been addressed to through the holy Prophet in these verses. Both these verses are categorical in their expression of the probability that the divine promise in the offing for us might either be the Doomsday or the punishment of any other kind. Thus, the present possibility of any punishment other than the Doomsday is immensely significant and exceptionally meaningful at this stage. Had the latter event been imminent for us, then mere mention of the possibility of the former would have proved extremely futile. The Qur'an further elaborates upon the subject in the following words:

28) Do they then feel secure that there may come to them an enveloping punishment from the Almighty or the Doomsday itself may come upon them all of a sudden and in their own inattention?<sup>54</sup>

28.1) Those who don't believe shall always be in doubt with regard to it until the Doomsday overtakes them suddenly or the punishment of a barren day befalls them.<sup>55</sup>



It can easily be discerned from both these verses that they are descriptive of the characteristics of the probable divine punishment mentioned in both the verses of the previous statement, and are affording some sort of a definite shape to it. As such, the phrase 'an enveloping punishment' in the former verse proclaims that the present humanity might be afflicted with such an all-encompassing punishment that would engulf the entire Earth. Whereas, the phrase 'punishment of a barren day' in the latter verse declares that all the terrestrial water would be dried up that day and the Earth would be rendered totally barren. It should once again be noted here too, in line with the previous statement, that the divine punishment has uniformly been contrasted with the Doomsday. Consider now the following verse, which very emphatically asserts that rather than the Doomsday it is only the punishment that is awaiting us:

29) ... He is a mere warner to you before *the onset of a severe punishment*.<sup>56</sup>

The Qur'an builds upon these arguments to state further thus:

30) Say: "Just ponder, if your water were to sink deep below the surface then who will bring surface liquid water to you?"<sup>57</sup>

*Ghour* in Arabic is a verbal noun, denoting 'to sink below the surface of the earth.' In the present verse, however, it has been used as an adjective of 'water.' According to the Arabic syntax, when a verbal noun is used as an adjective, it brings in extra emphasis in its actual import to mean 'to sink deep below the surface of the earth.' And *ma'een*, both according to the narrations and the lexicon, is that water which is visible to the eyes and flows on the surface of the earth too. In fact, it is this water that the modern astronomy terms it to be the surface liquid water. It has to be born in mind here that the present verse is appearing in an extremely meaningful counter to the query of the disbelievers, "They say, 'When will this threat come to pass, if you are truthful?'" contained in verse no. 25 of the same chapter, concerning the divine punishment. So, according to this counter query, the likely retribution to be administered to us would be such that all of our water would be made to sink deep below the surface causing the Earth to turn totally barren instantly and resulting in the mass extinction of all forms of life, both botanical and zoological, from its surface! And it is logical too that when, according to the statement no. 18, all the living species owe their origin and existence on the

Earth to water, they should continue to exist only until the water itself subsists on it. Now, it could be pondered as to how truthfully and forcefully the present phrase 'if your water were to sink deep below the surface' is interpreting the earlier phrases 'an enveloping punishment' and 'punishment of a barren day' contained in statement no. 28 above. It is very much obvious that when all of our water drains off then this punishment would be so horrifying and devastating that it will envelop the entire Earth and render it a barren field altogether. And the following assertion reinforces this contention even further and removes all the misgivings concerning its inevitable occurrence in exceptionally categorical terms thus:

30.1) We have made whatever is there on the Earth its adornment, in order to test them as to who would fare better. And we shall surely make whatever is there on it a barren field.<sup>58</sup>

It is, hence, being warned here very clearly that one day the Earth would be dealt a deadly blow in the form of divine punishment and would be rendered a totally barren field once again. In other words, the earth in its physical form would continue to exist as it is consequent even to the punishment. It would, however, be bereft of all its external beauty and the biological activity, and all the remnants of the civilization and culture thriving on it would be done away with from its surface in such a manner that if some extraterrestrials happen to observe it thereafter then they would be constrained to consider it that it might hardly have been inhabited ever. The Qur'an describes this state of being as 'we mowed them down as though they weren't at all inhabited previously' in chapter 10:24, which we shall take up later in this chapter.

Note further that it is being enquired in the verse under discussion as to who would bring 'surface liquid water' to us in the event of our 'water' sinking deep below the surface of the Earth in the event of the divine punishment. The more appropriate query here, however, would have been 'if your water were to sink deep below the surface then who will bring "it" back to you?' Obviously, demand needs to be made concerning the recovery of only the precise thing that was made to disappear earlier. But, it is an altogether different matter that our present water too is a surface liquid one. It could, thus, very well be concluded from this extremely significant change of expression that a broad hint is being given here that in the event of sinking



deep below the surface consequent to the divine punishment, the surface water changes its state from liquid to some other one and needs to be liquidized again in order to retrieve it back! We all know today that water exists in frozen (solid) and vaporized (gaseous) states too besides the usual liquid one.

Now, this amazing amazing and revolutionary clue of the surface liquid water sinking deep below the surface and changing to frozen or vaporized states in the event of the divine punishment has been able to unravel a profound contemporary scientific mystery of our Solar System in an extremely meaningful fashion. Modern science has conclusively gathered many a practical and observational and intellectual and argumentative facts concerning the existence of such surface liquid water on Mars and Venus in their geological pasts that doesn't exist in that precise form today. Nevertheless, as far as Mars is concerned, it is found sunk deep below its surface in the form of frozen ice. As stated in chapter one, science has also found the existence of an ancient atmosphere around it which is very thinly present even today. It logically flows from it that this must have been denser in the presence of surface liquid water, rendering the surface temperature and the atmospheric pressure to be hospitable and life-sustaining. Basing upon this and many more such arguments, modern science cautiously desires to conclude that whenever in the past the circumstances were conducive on Mars, life might have existed there in some form or the other, just to be wiped out when they got deteriorated. In the light of the present Qur'anic statements, however, it could easily be inferred that these planets are, in reality, earths themselves; they were live and active in their geological pasts similar to the present live phase of the Earth; they were then inhabited by men and jinn and obliterated by 'the enveloping punishments' and 'the punishments of a barren day;' their water sunk deep below to change its state to sub-surface frozen ice and, as a result, their atmospheres too began to thin out; they witnessed such geological changes gradually that they have remained barren and sterilized fields to date as if they haven't been inhabited at all. In other words, the punishment we are being warned with today has already been meted out to the inhabitants of these neighboring habitats, and the precise future in store for the Earth has been, for our admonition, preserved and showcased in our immediate backyard in the form of the dead Mars! It is only after viewing the close-by images of these dead planets taken by different space probes that one

could effectively visualize the true picture of these Qur'anic descriptions. Their death and destruction is so complete and horrific that no trace of the past civilization and culture survives on them today. Whatever left behind there is nothing but mere barren fields. The following verse emphasizes this statement even further thus:

30.2) Indeed, we have destroyed the habitations surrounding you, thereafter repeatedly changed the signs to them that they might turn back.<sup>59</sup>

The predecessor exegetes had considered the addressee in this verse to be the earliest Arabs. But, both according to the lexicon and the jurisprudence the address is general in nature and cannot be restricted in any way. Thus, the phrase 'the habitations surrounding you' here denotes such planets of our solar system surrounding the Earth as Mars and Venus, which are factual too. If the sphere of this phrase is broadened further, then it would include other terrestrial planets contained in the neighboring solar systems too. This might be the probable reason that it is proving that much difficult to establish radio communication with these exoplanets.

We had assumed in the first chapter a minimum of 100 billion earths in this gigantic universe by arguing upon no less than one earth in each of the 100 billion galaxies discovered so far in it. Now, more than one earth – live or dead – are being conclusively established just around our one single sun of the roughly 400 billion suns of our one single galaxy. One could, thus, very well deduce the actual number of the earths both in the light of these Qur'anic statements as well as the one discussed particularly under statement no. 17.

The current state of Mars wherein its atmosphere has become almost extinct bears another significant scientific insight for us in the celestial context. When bestowed with life in the past, its atmosphere to be denser is just inevitable. With an equatorial diameter of a quarter to thirteen thousand kilometers, the Earth too enjoys an atmosphere of around one and a half thousand kilometers surrounding it. Thus, its bulk increases to a quarter to sixteen thousand kilometers in the presence of the atmosphere, and shrinks back to its original size of a quarter to thirteen thousand kilometers in its absence or in the dead phase of the Earth. Further, it is also an observational fact that the Earth together with Mars and the other planets are constantly revolving in their orbits around the Sun at great speeds. Now, when the



multiple lives and deaths of all the earths have been established, it flows from it that at times they remain alive in the presence of atmosphere, which makes them bulkier, and at times turn dead in its absence consequent to the divine punishment, and shrink back to their original mass. This reality is relevant not only to the earths of our solar system alone but to those of the others solar systems of the entire universe too. Consider now the following assertion, which is revealing these very realities with recourse to an extremely amazing and meaningful expression:

31) Haven't we made the earths the ones contracting their wings while flying apace, alive and dead many a times?<sup>60</sup>

The current passage is the third in the sequence of queries being put to humanity in support of the inevitable occurrence of the Doomsday affirmed in the seventh verse, 'The one which you are being promised is about to happen for sure,' of the present chapter no. 77. This suggests that man's attention is being drawn here towards some significant natural reality. The first two of these queries are as follows: 'Haven't we destroyed the former ones? We shall then cause the latter ones too to follow them' and 'Haven't we created you out of mean water?' These latter queries shall be dealt with in due course.

The original Arabic noun *kifaat* used here in relation to the earths is a verbal noun denoting 'to contract ones wings while flying at great speed.' The classical dictionaries of the Arabic language *Lisan al-Arab* and *Al-Qamoos al-Muheet* are both wholly consistent with this meaning. Linguistically speaking, as this derived form of noun is *ism al-a'la* too, it denotes the very object that is supposed to produce that precise action. Zamakhshari, Razi, Baizawi, Aaloosi etc. too have taken this to mean similarly. Thus, *kifaat* is the one that contracts its wings while flying at great speed. Besides, it is evident from our earlier discussion that 'earth' is being used in its generic form here too. A similitude is, hence, being drawn here between the earths and *kifaat*. Accordingly, the very first scientific reality baring itself as a result of this simile is the rapid motion of all the earths together with our own! Remember, the Earth is continuously revolving in its orbit around the Sun at a velocity of around 100,000 kilometers per hour. And the second is that the earths are contracting their wings while flying. It is entirely logical now that

before contracting their wings in their flight, they keep them expanded too, as only that could be contracted which is already expanded previously. That is to say that the earths keep their wings contracted or expanded from time to time while flying. Besides, 'alive' and 'dead' are the circumstantial phrases, both corresponding to the respective expanded and contracted phases of the earths. That is, when the earths keep their wings expanded in their flight, they remain alive, and when they contract them, they meet with their death. Furthermore, both 'alive' and 'dead' appear here in their plural forms to convey the message that these conditions accrue to the earths not only once but on several occasions too. Thus, the moot point here is can these wings of the earths be anything other than their respective atmospheres! This re-establishes the multiple lives and deaths of the earths from an altogether different perspective. The Earth, for instance, is alive today by keeping its wings expanded, and Mars is dead by contracting them. Here too it could be seen as to how meaningfully 'earth' in its singular form is being used as a generic noun even in the absence of 'skies' accompanying it, which further substantiates the general principle laid down in this regard under statement no. 6. The following statement too corroborates the present one even further thus:

32) Do you feel so secure that the One who is in the skies will not cause the Earth to swallow you, and then it begins to shiver all of a sudden? Or do you feel so secure that the One who is in the skies will not shower pebbles upon you? Soon you shall know as to how my warning was. Those who were before them too had belied, how was my punishment then? Didn't they observe the fliers above them, some with their wings spread and some contracting them? It is the Compassionate who alone holds them. Indeed, everything is right within his purview. Which of your army can help you against the Compassionate *when he decides to unleash his fury upon you too?* Surely, the disbelievers are in absolute deception.<sup>61</sup>

It is very much obvious that the address here is general in nature. And the original Arabic noun *tayr*, the plural of *ta'yer*, could also be used in relation to any of the fliers besides the usual birds. This usage has found acceptance among the earliest classical Arabic scholars too. As a matter of fact, it is in this very sense that it has appeared in the current passage too, as birds cannot contract their wings while flying. Furthermore, the verse 'Didn't



they observe the fliers above them, some with their wings spread and some contracting them?' is appearing in evidence to the death and destruction of the earlier races mentioned in the immediately preceding verse, 'Those who were before them too had belied, how was my punishment then?' It stems from this query that it is intended through it to drive home some meaningful and admonitory truth concerning the earlier extinct nations. By the mere casting of a glance at the birds expanding and contracting their wings, one doesn't gain any insight at all.

In fact, all the five verses of this statement are quite in harmony with each other and concern the divine warnings. So, in the same fashion in which a similitude had summarily been drawn in the previous statement between the earths and the ones contracting their wings while flying apace, the same fact is metaphorically being elaborated upon in the present statement through the phrase 'the fliers above them, some with their wings spread and some contracting them.' And so, the lives and deaths of the earths mentioned there are being accorded a universal philosophy of creation and destruction here. As such, man is being urged not to consider himself so secure and confident from the divine wrath, as scores of unfaithful races have been destroyed before him too. And the proof of this retribution is the earths placed above and all around us, some with their wings spread and some contracting them continually. That is, man is being exhorted to observe and take heed from those numerous extraterrestrial races surrounding him that have completely been devastated together with their abodes as well, and, as a result, those earths have remained barren and sterilized fields up till now with their life-harboring atmospheres having been contracted and totally dissipated.

The words 'wings spread' and 'contracting them,' appearing in the original Arabic text as adjectives of the earths, bear another significant insight for us. According to the Arabic syntax, the former is an active participle and the latter, a verb in its present tense. Since the attribute of the former adjective is relatively more enduring than the latter, logic requires that the latter adjective should also have been an active participle as 'contracted.' This suggests that these two diverse forms of adjectives have been employed only deliberately with dual objectives. The first of them being, the Qur'an shouldn't attract the blame of illogicality in the earlier ages with the use of the word 'contracted' and the question as to where do the birds fly in the air with

their wings completely contracted shouldn't arise in the minds at all. Whereas, 'contracting them' was able to provide temporary reprieve from the emergence of this doubt. And the other exceptionally insightful objective being, when their true import is itself convincingly revealed in the latter ages, this divine phenomenon is further stressed with this change in expression and man is provided with another opportunity to revert back to spirituality by informing him that the Almighty hasn't just stopped at creating countless number of earths brimming with human races, some of them alive with their wings spread and others having contracted them long back, but the chain of death and destruction on a universal scale is continuing relentlessly even to this day and this divine spectacle is unleashing itself somewhere or the other every now and then!

The very next expression 'It is the Compassionate who alone holds them' is underlying this fact still further that even after dealing these earths with the deadly blow, it is the Compassionate Being alone who is holding them from losing their physical balance and colliding with other heavenly bodies as a result. This is why the present human race is being quizzed in the subsequent phrase as to which of its armies can help it against the Almighty in the event of his decision to unleash that sort of fury upon it too. Subsequently, in response to the insistence of the disbelievers upon the materialization of this wrath through the passage "They say: 'when will this promise be, if you are truthful?'," contained in verse no. 25 of this chapter, it is being countered and threatened in verse no. 30 through "Say: 'Just think, if your water were to sink deep below the surface, who will bring you surface liquid water?'" to make our water too to sink deep below the surface and cause the Earth to contract its wings and meet with its natural death, as described in statement no. 30 above. This counter query, thus, is interpreting the earlier passage 'Didn't they observe the fliers above them, some with their wings spread and some contracting them?' as to why and when do the earths contract atmospheres. It is very much clear now that it is only in the event of the water sinking deep below consequent to the divine punishment that the earths contract their atmospheres, whose observational and practical testimony is being provided with utmost honesty and sincerity in the context of Mars by the modern astronomy too. All the 15 verses of the latter half of the current chapter 67, 'The Kingdom,' are consistent in their denotation thus. In fact, this chapter



truly characterizes its name, and the very objective behind the creation of the universe and the divine kingdom encompassing all through it have very coherently been related in it in an extremely moving and convincing idiom. We shall deal with the first half of this chapter in due course, which would drive home this fact even more conclusively.

This very well suggests that the Earth is surrounded by numerous exoplanets, some of them inhabited, some others destroyed long ago, and many more are being devastated through the divine punishments regularly. And it is evident from the phrase 'Didn't they observe' with respect to these terrestrial planets that many of these live or dead ones certainly fall under the realm of our eyesight or intellectual insight. Thus, these two latter statements fairly reasonably summarize all the earlier statements of this chapter and intertwine them under one unified philosophy. The following two more statements too underline them even further thus:

33) Didn't they observe the fliers subjected in the celestial space? It is the Almighty who alone holds them. Indeed, there are huge signs in it for those who believe.<sup>62</sup>

According to the classical lexicographers, the original Arabic word *jao* used here denotes the entire space in between the earth and the sky (*Al-Sihah* and *Lisan al-Arab*). Since the ancient past, this word is being used to mean 'air' too (*Lisan al-Arab*, *Al-Mufradath*, *Al-Qamoos al-Muheet*, *Taj al-Uroos* etc.). The latter meaning has gained currency from this aspect too that air itself was supposed to be permeating all through the space between the earth and the sky then (*Lisan al-Arab* and *Taj al-Uroos*).

Now, when *jao* encompasses the entire space existing between the earth and the sky, and its mere singular mention would have sufficed in the present instance, a pertinent question arises as to why was it governed with the word 'celestial' (*al-sama* in the original Arabic text) in the phrase 'celestial space' then? Emphasis cannot be said to be the motive either. Had it been the case, then 'terrestrial space' (*jao al-Ardh*) would have been the more appropriate substitute. In the contemporary period, however, this divine riddle has been resolved very conclusively. So, the current concept of space was completely out of imagination in the olden era. Modern science, however, has discovered that the terrestrial atmosphere is confined to only about 1,500 kilometers

around us. Thereafter, the boundless sea of space takes over and extends to tens of billions of light years in every direction. Science has, thus, divided the entire area between the earth and the sky into two distinct regions: atmosphere and space. If the former is concerned with the earth, the latter is associated with the sky. This clearly establishes that it is only to indicate the latter that the present phrase has marvelously been employed in the current verse. It could, thus, be pondered as to who could the fliers in the celestial space be — birds or the earths themselves? This once again reinforces the fact that 'fliers' have metaphorically been used here too to denote the constantly revolving earths.

Note further that in the same manner in which the passage 'It is the Compassionate who alone holds them' appeared in the previous statement concerning the fliers, here too it has similarly been stated as 'It is the Almighty who alone holds them.' This similarity of expression once again indicates the consistency in their denotation. Besides, the independent and singular mention of the term 'subjected' signifies that just like the Earth is presently subjected to us, those earths too have similarly been subjected to the inhabitants given existence therein. This is the reason why the statement of 'Indeed, there are huge signs in it for those who believe' is being advanced subsequently.

34) Didn't they observe that whosoever is in the skies and the earths sings the praise of the Almighty, and the fliers too with their wings spread? Each one of them knows his prayer and his praise. The Almighty knows very well whatever they do. To him belongs the kingdom of the skies and the earths, and to him is the return.<sup>63</sup>

An extremely touching depiction of the majestic kingdom of the Almighty encompassing all the seven skies and the earths is being made in these verses. As such, 'the fliers with their wings spread' right in the middle of this impressive celestial phenomenon cannot be such miserable and inappropriate creatures as the birds, but should be the same constantly revolving and life-bearing earths that constitute the functional units of life in the universe. Thus, by repeating the phrase 'the fliers with their wings spread,' after 'whosoever is in the skies and the earths sings the praise of the Almighty,' man is being acquainted with the knowledge that it is not only the intelligent beings present



in the skies and the earths who are in the constant praise of the Almighty, but the earths which they inhabit too, with their wings spread, are expressing their gratitude to him over their respective lives. It is to emphasize this latter phrase that it is being affirmed again through 'To him belongs the kingdom of the skies and the earths' that the praising of the earths is due to the reign of the Almighty extending over all of them. Note further the sagacious difference of expression that two entirely different words are simultaneously being used here to denote the earths; 'earths' in their literal sense, and 'the fliers with their wings spread,' metaphorically. It demonstrates too well that both the present and all the earlier figurative instances have deliberately been employed with the dual purpose of safeguarding the predecessors from any unintended complications in their comprehension and unveiling the most impressive intellectual and scientific marvel of the Qur'an thus far before the modern man.

From our discussion in the present chapter it is clearly evident that the Qur'an speaks of two different kinds of punishments for the wayward nations prior to the eventual occurrence of the Doomsday on a universal scale. The first of them being those punishments that have been meted out to such nations of the current human race as the peoples of the Prophets Noah, Lot, Hud etc. locally. The second of them being those punishments that comprehensively envelop an entire earth and exterminate all forms of life from its surface, which it terms to be the death of the earth. It is only this latter form of punishments that constitute the subject matter of our present discussion. The Qur'an explains the philosophy of this all-enveloping punishment on a universal scale in the following words:

35) The similitude of worldly life is like that water which we sent down from the skies, and therewith grew the vegetation of the earths of which men and cattle eat, until, when the earths took on their glitter and adorned themselves and its inhabitants thought that they had power over them, our command came upon them by night or day, and we mowed them down as though they weren't at all inhabited previously. Thus do we explain the signs of our providence to the people who reflect.<sup>64</sup>

It is evident from the phraseology employed here that this Qur'anic statement is general in nature, and, as such, the worldly life described could be that of any of the earths. Besides, as 'earth' appears in the context of 'sky,'

generally all the earths of the universe are also meant here. Thus, a complete life-cycle of all the earths is being depicted through an exceptionally meaningful expression in this passage. If statement no. 18 summarily conveyed the revival of the dead earths through rainwater and the subsequent scattering of all forms of life in them, the present statement is exploring the matter even further to state that as a result of their revival through rainwater different species of the botanical world took shape on them initially to be followed by those of the zoological world in order to utilize the former. With the passage of time, it led to great material development. As a result, man was so enthralled of his accomplishments that he neglected the spiritual aspect altogether. This led to the onset of the swift divine wrath, which exterminated him. It was not only he who was eliminated as a result, but all forms of life and the means of life too were wiped away, rendering the earths dead and sterilized in a way as if they were never inhabited earlier. Their death and destruction was so complete that if anyone happened to observe them, he would be unwilling to consider them earths. It could once again be pondered as to how realistically the present extremely compact but awfully meaningful expression of 'we mowed them down as though they weren't at all inhabited previously' is illustrating Mars and other such planets that have come under our in depth empirical scrutiny. This is the reason why the scientific fraternity itself is so puzzled even today whether or not to enumerate them under the category of the earths. The Qur'an explores this well-entrenched relationship of the earths with water at another place thus:

36) Of everything we have treasures, but we send it down only in a known measure. We sent down water-laden winds, then caused water to descend from the sky, and then made you drink it, yet you are in no way capable of storing it, *nevertheless we can make it sink deep below at any time we decide*. It is we who give life and death *to the earths through the respective provision and extinction of water*, and it is we who succeed *them after their deaths*. We certainly know the predecessors from among you *gone by in these earths* and the successors *too*. Indeed, your Lord will gather them all, and he is all-wise and all-knowing.<sup>65</sup>

It could be noticed as to how meaningfully all the talk is being carried out precisely with respect to the earths without even naming them specifically. The context, however, reveals that continuously from the past five verses,



which commenced with the verse 'Indeed, we have made constellations in the sky and adorned it for the onlookers' mentioned in statement no. 2.3, the entire discussion is being carried out in the context of the creation of the galaxies of the universe together with their constituent earths and the provision of the means of life and sustenance for those inhabiting them. In the present passage, therefore, the most essential of these means, 'water,' is being dealt with at some length. Thus, after the revival of the dead earths through rainwater and their subsequent death and destruction together with all their inhabitants, 'It is we who give life and death,' no other creatures are given existence in them for a considerable period of time nor would anyone succeed them, 'it is we who succeed.' The subsequent verse, 'We certainly know the predecessors from among you and the successors' reveals the former and later creatures of these earths in their live phases. And the concluding verse, 'Indeed, your Lord will gather them all, and he is all-wise and all-knowing' is further substantiating this inference that the Almighty does possess a very wise and prudent strategy in scattering his creatures all across this amazingly ancient and vast universe and that he would pick and gather all of them from its every nook and corner on the Day of Judgment through his absolute knowledge. It could now be pondered as to how sensible our argument was under statement no. 2 where we had interpreted *burooj* to be the galaxies and inferred the existence of the parent earths from the mere existence of accompanying moons in the galaxies.

Note further that all the former and the later creatures of these earths are being referred to as 'from among you' here, unmistakably implying all of them to be the humans themselves. This is, thus, the first instance of keeping our word given to the esteemed readers in this regard under statement no. 25. Further instances shall follow in due course. Besides, it is these former human beings whom the Qur'an refers to as 'how many a race have we destroyed before them' under statement nos. 14 and 21 in the celestial and the terrestrial contexts respectively, thereby substantiating our argument that the term 'race' implies all the inhabitants given existence in any of the live phases of any given earth. Consider now the following verse which clears the apparent ambiguity present in the current statement and reinforces it further too:

37) How many a habitation did we destroy that exulted in their living!

Those are their abodes that were never inhabited thereafter barring a few, and it was we who succeeded them.<sup>66</sup>

The precise reality of the lives and the deaths of the earths conveyed in the previous statement through 'It is we who give life and death, and it is we who succeed' without even specifically mentioning them is being metaphorically expressed through 'habitations' and 'abodes' here. This is the reason why the expression 'it was we who succeeded them' is being repeated once again here too. As stated earlier too, this similarity of expression points towards consistency in their implication. Besides, the passage 'Those are their abodes that were never inhabited thereafter barring a few' while bestowing us with the information that only a few of those destroyed habitations were rehabilitated is also requiring from us that we take lesson from their miserable plight. Remember, we were similarly required under statement no. 32 too through 'Didn't they observe the fliers above them, some with their wings spread and some contracting them?' Both of these passages are, thus, mutually interpreting and reinforcing too. Furthermore, the expression 'Indeed, we have destroyed the habitations surrounding you' mentioned in statement no. 30.2 should also be born in mind here, which too is quite in line with these admonitions. The latter two passages, thus, strengthen the present statement even further.

It should particularly be noted that the revolutionary and far-reaching point being driven home under statement no. 36 above concerning the bringing into existence of many more human races in all the earths of the universe in the future too includes our own Earth as well. When the Earth has already undergone many bouts of lives and deaths in its geological past, this seems a natural corollary too. And according to the previous Qur'anic statements, it is not to be extinguished or dispersed completely even after the extermination of the current race inhabiting it either. The following three more statements, with recourse to varied expressions, underline this point even further thus:

38) Remember, the Almighty shall revive the earths after their deaths. Indeed, we have explained the signs to you in order that you may understand.<sup>67</sup>

Our present discussion concerning the lives and the deaths of all the earths



of the universe makes it amply clear that here too 'earth' is being used in its generic sense, which further substantiates the principle laid down under statement no. 6 in this regard. It is, thus, being stressed in exceptionally unequivocal terms that all the earths of the universe in general would certainly once again be brought to life after their imminent deadly phases. Bestowal of life on the earths once again is a very obvious indication of bringing into existence of latter human races in them in line with the past.

39) Haven't we destroyed the predecessors? Thereafter we shall make the successors too to follow them.<sup>68</sup>

As stated under statement no. 31, this passage is the first in the sequence of queries being put to humanity in support of the inevitability of the Doomsday affirmed in the seventh verse of the present chapter no. 77: 'The one which you are being promised is about to happen for sure.' Thus, here too it is aimed to draw the attention of man towards some essential natural reality. It could as well be gathered now that the third question mentioned there has also been advanced in further corroboration of the present one itself. That is to say that the message being given here concerning the death and destruction of both the predecessor and successor human races by arguing upon the inevitability of the Doomsday is itself being corroborated through the third question as to whether the earths weren't made to bear multiple lives and deaths. This clearly shows that these former and later humans pertain to the respective former and later live phases of the earths. Thus, the predecessor and successor human races mentioned here are the very same that were discussed under statement no. 36 too.

40) It is we who have created them and strengthened their joints, and we shall repeatedly replace them with their likes whenever we please.<sup>69</sup>

The address is general in nature in respect of the entire current human race. According to the Arabic syntax, when a verbal noun is also repeated after the verb, it provides extra stress to the action in question and conveys the multiplicity of its occurrence too. In the present verse, the verbal noun *tabdeel* is being repeated after its verb *baddalna* to meaning 'we shall repeatedly replace.' Besides, *i'za* (whenever) is a conditional particle, which is used in relation to an event whose occurrence is a certainty. As such, this

Qur'anic statement is unmistakably conveying the message that many more human races are destined to follow us on the Earth in line with its past. Thus, the ones from among us discussed under statement no. 36 who would be succeeding us on the Earth in the future are also being interpreted here as 'their likes.' Now, when there still remain many more live phases of our one single Earth and so also the very many human races to be given existence in them, then those of all the other earths and their inhabitants could also be presumed upon.

When so many more of the lives of all the earths of the universe including those of our very own still remain, it bears another significant intellectual insight for us. It reveals that the universe cannot generally become extinct in the near future. There remain, on the other hand, many more locally-effective mini-Doomsdays on an earthly scale prior to the eventual advent of the all-embracing universal one. The Qur'an very vividly depicts these local Doomsdays at another place thus:

41) ... The disbelievers shall continue to be afflicted by a knocking sound owing to their deeds, or it shall keep befalling near their abode until the promise of the Almighty comes about. Indeed, the Almighty does not go back on his promise. Many a messenger before you have been ridiculed too, so I gave the disbelievers a reprieve, then seized them. How was my punishment then?<sup>70</sup>

The original Arabic word *Qa'ri'a* (knocking sound) appearing in this passage has been defined in the chapter *Qa'ri'a* itself of the Qur'an in the following words:

41.1) The knocking sound. What is the knocking sound? Do you know what the knocking sound is? The day when mankind would be like the scattered moths and the mountains would be like the loosened wool.<sup>71</sup>

It has also been described at another place thus:

41.2) The inevitable. What is the inevitable? Do you know what the inevitable is? Thamud and Aa'd belied the knocking sound.<sup>72</sup>

These are the only three occasions on which *Qa'ri'a* has appeared in the Qur'an. It is quite evident from the last instance that it has only been used in apposition to the 'inevitable' there. As such, both of them are synonymous



with each other. According to the Qur'anic terminology, thus, *Qa'ri'a* is an inevitable knocking sound that, when unleashed, causes mankind to be like the scattered moths and the mountains, the loosened wool. The predecessor exegetes, however, meant it to be the all-encompassing Doomsday on the latter two occasions, whereas in the passage under discussion they, in order to overcome the intricacy as to where do the disbelievers are getting afflicted by it on a continuous basis, took to interpreting it to mean 'misfortune.'

It is, now, fairly evident from these verses that the destruction caused by this inevitable knocking sound is confined to a single earth alone. The Doomsday, on the other hand, would generally encompass the entire universe resulting in the mass extinction of all that which is contained in it according to the Qur'an itself:

41.3) They ask you as to when would the Doomsday be. Say: "Its knowledge is with my Lord alone; it will be only he who would disclose it at its time; it would, *however*, weigh heavily in all the skies and the earths..."<sup>73</sup>

41.4) When the trumpet is sounded all those who will be in the skies and all those who will be in the earths would lose their consciousness except for those whom the Almighty pleases...<sup>74</sup>

It could now easily be deduced from this discussion that the inevitable knocking sound cannot be meant to be the all-encompassing Doomsday, but, in reality, it is this locally occurring mini-Doomsday which engulfs an entire earth to render it a barren field, and which has already befallen upon our own, those of the surrounding, and other innumerable celestial earths many a times not only in the past, but continues to wreck havoc everywhere even today. This Qur'anic term, thus, finds a uniform literal meaning everywhere without the labor of resorting to any borrowed sense anywhere.

A depiction is, hence, being made in this passage of the divine punishment constantly engulfing the disbelievers and dealing a deadly blow either to their own abodes or to those of their neighboring ones all through the universe. This is the reason why 'abode' has been used in its singular form to indicate the place of dwelling of all the disbelievers. Thus, in the same manner as 'habitation' has been used to denote an entire earth metaphorically, 'abode' too has been used here similarly.

Besides, another significant argument in favor of this contention is the

subsequent verse, which is quite brilliantly interpreting the present verse and the true import of the 'knocking sound.' Thus, the passage 'Many a messenger before you too have been ridiculed, so I gave the disbelievers a reprieve, then seized them. How was my punishment then?' reveals in very clear terms that the inevitable knocking sound the disbelievers are continuously being afflicted with is this very punishment that has befallen them on the earlier occasions too. A pertinent question certainly arises here as to how could this divine punishment be particularized with the disbelievers alone when believers would also be present at the time of its occurrence. Our forthcoming discussion, however, would certainly establish that this latter group is saved by this terrible eventuality all the time.

It could now be pondered as to how meaningfully identical and mutually interpreting are the expressions 'The disbelievers shall continue to be afflicted by a knocking sound owing to their deeds, or it shall keep befalling near their abode' of the present statement and 'Didn't they observe the fliers above them, some with their wings spread and some contracting them?' and 'Those are their abodes that were never inhabited thereafter barring a few' contained in statement nos. 32 and 37 respectively. We shall further elaborate upon this punishment of the inevitable knocking sound in a while, which would be able to crystallize the matter even further.

When such a large number of regional Doomsdays have already struck the different habitats of the universe prior to the ultimate all-encompassing one, and many more are still in the offing, we shall examine the latter in detail in the sixth chapter. Thus, when the lives and the deaths of the earths revolve fundamentally around the respective provision and extinction of water, we shall conclude this discussion with an extremely clear warning concerning the extinction of our own water and the ultimate unleashing upon us of the punishment of a barren day:

42) We have sent down water from the sky in a determined measure and caused it to stay in the earth, and indeed we have the power to carry it away too.<sup>75</sup>

The assertion here of the terrestrial water getting carried away in the wake of the divine punishment is very much indicative of the fact that it will not be obliterated altogether, but it would continue to stay somewhere or the other,



albeit in some other form. Thus, this declaration, with recourse to a different expression, is driving home the very same reality of our surface water sinking deep below the surface and changing its state from liquid to some other one consequent to the divine punishment as contained in statement no. 30.

When water bears such a profound relationship with the lives and deaths of the earths, we shall now try and explore the other Qur'anic statements in order to arrive at as to how this is made to vanish from them:

43) O the tribes of jinn and men, if you are able to escape from the bounds of the skies and the earths, do escape; but you can't escape without an enormous power. Which of the bounties of your Lord will both of you deny then? *Remember, if you attempt to escape ever, let loose at you will be a flame of fire and smoke, then you will not be able to defend yourselves.*<sup>76</sup>

As argued upon under statement no. 16, the address here is universal in context and in relation to the worldly affairs of both the men and jinn inhabiting all through it. As a matter of fact, this passage bears an inherent relationship with the modern space age and is revealing a vital celestial phenomenon in an extremely marvelous fashion. The modern science has discovered the space to be abounding with electromagnetic radiations like gamma rays, X-rays, ultraviolet light, visible light, infrared rays, microwaves, and radio waves radiated chiefly by our own Sun and the other celestial bodies as well. These are the energy-rich radiations that make life possible on the Earth. Of them, ultraviolet rays encircling the Earth from a very close proximity are the most fatal ones. If they succeed in making their way directly to the Earth ever, then all life forms from its surface would be burnt up and extinguished. The ozone layer present in the atmosphere secures us from these lethal rays by absorbing them and effectively blocking their passage to the surface of the Earth directly. So, it is the guarantor of our origin and subsistence on the Earth. It now appears that it is the entire spectrum of these very electromagnetic radiations that the Qur'an is referring to them as 'a flame of fire' and 'smoke' here, which are astonishingly coinciding with the ultraviolet rays and generally all the other forms of radiations respectively. Remember, the Qur'an has very clearly spelt out under statement no. 4 that all the primordial matter of the universe prior to its transformation into the present form was in the state of smoke, which the modern science itself

considers to be the state of radiation. Thus, there exists a very strong possibility that men and jinn are being cautioned here that even if they succeeded in escaping from the bounds of the skies and the earths, these fatal rays would engulf them and they would not be able to defend themselves from them. So, the astronauts wear protective spacesuits while venturing out into outer space. It should also be born in mind here that the current statement is being made in the context of all the celestial earths, rather than merely our own single one. This quite magnificently reveals that this very system of the solar electromagnetic radiations and the protective layers of ozone surrounding their accompanying earths are to be found all through the universe as well! The following six more statements strengthen our present contention even further:

44) They require from you to hasten the punishment. Hadn't there been a determined term, it would have come upon them by now. It will certainly confront them all of a sudden and in their inattention. They require from you to hasten the punishment, whereas the hell is indeed surrounding the disbelievers. That day the punishment shall envelop them from above them and from beneath their feet and declare, "Taste *the flavor of* what you had been doing."<sup>77</sup>

It is too obvious from this passage and particularly from the fact of the hastening of the punishment by the disbelievers that a description of the worldly punishment to be meted out to us in the future is being made in all these three verses in a very coherent fashion. Another argument in support of this contention is the complete agreement — both literal and meaningful — between the punishments of 'That day the punishment shall envelop them' described here and 'an enveloping punishment' contained in statement no. 28. And yet another reason in its favor is the reality of the hell surrounding us in this worldly life itself, which cannot in anyway be factual. This shows that the very flame of fire reported in the previous statement to be let loose upon the men and jinn in the event of their escaping the bounds of the skies and the earths is metaphorically being described in the current statement as such a hell which is already surrounding us from such close distance and would be unleashed upon us from every direction the day when the Almighty decides to punish us. Remember, the protective ozone cover is merely around 15-30



kilometers away from the surface of the earth. Besides, here too the description of this hell to be surrounding merely the disbelievers once again conveys the reality that this punishment would be meted out to them alone and that the believers would be saved the ignominy of this terrible day. This further strengthens our contention made under statement no. 41 in this regard.

45) If we defer the punishment from them till an appointed term, they will certainly ask as to what is holding it back. Indeed, the day it comes to them it shall not be turned aside from them, and the one they are mocking at is itself encircling them.<sup>78</sup>

If the punishment which the disbelievers had been hastening for themselves had been metaphorically described in the previous statement as a hell already surrounding them, the same message is being conveyed literally in the current statement that the very punishment they are mocking at is itself encircling them. This once again establishes that the hell here is nothing but this precise worldly punishment resembling itself in its makeup, which further emphasizes the previous statement.

46) They say, "When will this threat come to pass, if you are truthful?" If only the disbelievers knew of the time when they would neither be able to ward off the fire from their faces and their backs nor would they be helped! It will come to them all of a sudden to their astonishment, and they shall neither be able to repel it, nor shall they be given any reprieve. The messengers before you were ridiculed too, so the one they used to mock at encircled them. Say, "Who guards you from *this punishment of the Merciful* by night and by day?" Yet, they have turned away from the reminder of their Lord.<sup>79</sup>

It is clearly evident from the very first verse of the current passage that the punishment to be meted to us in this worldly life is the topic of discussion here too. In fact, the entire passage is depicting this impending punishment in a universal setting in an extremely coherent fashion. So, the very flame of fire contained in statement no. 43, and metaphorically expressed in the subsequent statement as such a hell that would be let loose at us from above and from beneath our feet, is further being described here to be unleashed upon us both from before and behind us as well. Besides, if this punishment is stated in the statement no. 45 as the one that may not be turned aside from

us in the event of its occurrence, the same message is being conveyed in the current one too that we may not be able to repel it. And the passage "Who guards you from *this punishment of the Merciful* by night and by day?" once again describes the very fact of this hellish punishment that it is the Merciful Lord who guards us from it all the time when it has besieged us so closely.

Furthermore, the passage, 'The messengers before you were ridiculed too, so the one they used to mock at encircled them' right in between this well-structured discourse, is enlightening us with another reality that this punishment of flames of fire to be unleashed upon us wouldn't in any way be unique to the present human race alone, but countless number of other races throughout the length and breadth of the universe too have already met the same fate. Notice also the striking similarity of expression existing between the current statement and 'the one they are mocking at is itself encircling them' contained in the previous statement. This too needs to be born in mind at this stage that according to the verses mentioned in statement no. 12, which are the preceding verses of the chapter to which the verses under discussion too belong, innumerable races inhabiting the different earths of the universe too have been stated to have only been cut and reduced to ashes. In addition, if the verses contained in the statement no. 21 are considered in unison with their immediately preceding verses mentioned hereunder, they would reveal that the earlier human races given existence in our own Earth have been burnt to death too:

47) We did not send any army from the sky against his people, nor was there any necessity for us to do so. It was merely one single cry, and they were extinguished very swiftly. Alas for the servants! No messenger came to them ever whom they did not mock at.<sup>80</sup>

This passage is depicting the death and destruction of the habitation (*al-qar'yah*) mentioned in verse no. 13 of the current chapter number 36 whose inhabitants had constantly belied the messengers and were burnt down and reduced to ashes through the punishment of a crying sound. Thus, after the statement of the death and destruction of many more of such terrestrial races in the immediately subsequent verses mentioned under statement no. 21, the earlier dead phases of the Earth have been considered to be the very mark of their annihilation. This further strengthens our contention made under



statement no. 12 concerning the denotation in the universal context of the term 'habitation' to be an entire earth. And as this term has appeared as a proper noun, it should refer only to our own Earth. Thus, the fact of the many previous live phases of the Earth and the different human races given existence in them is being described in these verses. Besides, the passage 'We didn't send any army from the sky against his people, nor was there any necessity for us to do so' bears yet another significant insight for us that this punishment doesn't descend from any faraway location in the sky, but it is the same which is so closely encircling us. Consider now the following verse, which quite literally reveals that the present human race too would be extinguished through this very punishment of a crying sound:

48) They just await a single cry, which shall not allow even a moment to gasp.<sup>81</sup>

It can now be pondered if this impending punishment to be unleashed upon us and possessive of so many shared characteristics could be anything other than the ultraviolet rays themselves that are capable of burning out and exterminating all life forms from the surface of the Earth? It has to be born in mind here that the basic features of the probable punishment to be let loose upon us as described above such as the facts of its encircling us from a very close range, not descending from any faraway location in the sky, being hellish in character, being guarded by the Almighty himself from reaching us directly, being able to make the surface liquid water to sink deep below and extinguishing all life forms in the event of their reaching the surface of the Earth directly etc. are precisely the same as those of the ultraviolet rays themselves. Now, even after the perusal of such diverse insights if there exist any misgiving in this regard, the following one shall set at rest that too very clearly and decisively:

49) Wait for the day when the sky would bring forth a manifest smoke, which would envelop mankind. This would be a painful punishment.<sup>82</sup>

As discussed under statement no. 43, the earlier statement no. 4 describes all forms of cosmic radiations to be smoke. Statement no. 43 itself has classified these radiations under the two broad heads of 'a flame of fire' and 'smoke' to coincide with the ultraviolet rays and generally all the other electromagnetic radiations respectively. It is now very clear that it is these

fatal ultraviolet rays that are being referred to as 'a manifest smoke' in the current statement. Its adjective clause 'which would envelop mankind' is further reinforcing this argument that it is precisely this all-enveloping punishment humanity had been warned with through the statement nos. 28 and 44 too. Though quite a few narrations too have been quoted recounting the circumstance of the revelation of these verses — most of which were figuratively explained to the dislike of many of the predecessor exegetes themselves — our interpretation is fully consistent with its literal denotation. It, thus, strings together all the other statements quoted previously in accordance with the basic principle 'a passage of the Qur'an interprets the other' and sums them up in this very brief passage. All the more, Mars etc. too bear testimony to the fact that their current miserable plight owes basically to these deadly radiations alone.

It can now be pondered as to how meaningfully the 'knocking sound' contained in statement no. 41 is being described as 'a flame of fire,' 'hell,' 'punishment,' 'fire,' and 'cry' through the statement nos. 43-48. It could hence be gathered from these statements that when the ultraviolet rays succeed in penetrating the ozone layer to reach the surface of the Earth directly, they do so with a knocking sound and cause death and destruction too. As a result, all the living species on the surface of the Earth would be burnt up and extinguished, water vapor molecule would be split, the surface water would sink deep below to render the Earth a barren field, and the atmosphere would thin out and vanish eventually. And the earth too would gradually alter its topography through the many volcanic and tectonic changes to be rendered a desolate and sterile field as if it was never populated earlier: 'as though they weren't at all inhabited previously.' Contemplate once more upon the present despicable plight of Mars and other terrestrial planets of our solar system whether they are in anyway different from these Qur'anic proclamations. This suggests that the very punishment we are being scared with here today has already been meted out to the inhabitants of these and other innumerable celestial earths in the past itself, and still many more continue to fall prey to it every now and then.

The Qur'an not only considers the impending punishment to be unleashed upon us to be that of the ultraviolet radiations themselves, but it also affirms that its preliminary specimen has already begun to take effect on the Earth in



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The Qur'an not only considers the impending punishment to be unleashed upon us to be that of the ultraviolet radiations themselves, but it also affirms that its preliminary specimen has already begun to take effect on the Earth in



the contemporary period. As a matter of fact, the protective ozone layer has depleted considerably over Antarctica to form a large hole known as the ozone hole. Consequently, the ultraviolet rays have succeeded in penetrating the atmosphere and directly reaching a vast area of the Earth beneath this hole, and have virtually sterilized its surface. The Qur'an depicts this emerging punishment in the following words, which strengthens our contention even further:

50) They say, "When will this threat come to pass, if you are truthful?" Say, "Perhaps some of what you seek to hasten on has already approached right behind you." Indeed, your Lord is full of grace for mankind, yet most of them are ungrateful.<sup>83</sup>

It has to be born in mind here that on a couple of earlier occasions too, in response to the same question "Say, 'When will this threat come to pass, if you are truthful'" of the disbelievers if we had been warned under statement no. 30 with making our water vanish and sink deep below the surface, we were admonished under statement no. 46 with an all-encompassing fire engulfing us from every direction and burning us down to ashes. Now, with respect to the same query, the reply 'Perhaps some of what you seek to hasten on has already approached right behind you' very clearly indicates that the punishment capable of turning us to ashes and obliterating our water could only be that of the ultraviolet rays themselves that have already wrecked havoc in our own "backyards" (right behind you) of Antarctica.

There could as well be other means of sterilizing the Earth's surface and obliterating all forms of life from it. The most notable among them being the Earth's periodic collision with asteroids and comets, which holds many genuine concerns too. It has met with many such impacts in its geological past too. Science has gathered much evidence to show that the Earth had met with one such impact around 65 million years ago. Probably, a comet 15 kilometers across had smashed into its surface at Mexico to form a large crater 200 kilometers wide then. That impact ushered in its wake such global climatic and environmental changes that virtually all the living species became extinct from the surface of the Earth. Modern science estimates that the Earth is met with such colossal impacts once in every 100 million years on an average. The recent Jovian impacts of 1994 too bear many significant insights for us. Such

extensive was the damage caused on the surface of Jupiter by the different fragments of the comet Shoemaker-Levy 9, none of which exceeded a kilometer in diameter, that it would have been nothing less than an all-embracing global punishment to us, had the impact been with the Earth. And if an asteroid or a comet 200 kilometers across happens to collide with the Earth, it is estimated to emit such enormous energy in its wake that would melt and vaporize its surrounding crust. The surface temperature would rise to 1,000 degree centigrade, all our oceans would evaporate instantly, all life forms would perish, and the Earth would be rendered barren. Remember, the outer solar system is home to some one trillion large and small comets, many of which visit the inner planetary system very often. Besides, there is an asteroid belt lying in between Mars and Jupiter in which hundreds of thousands of asteroids move around the Sun. Occasionally, some of them enter the orbits of the Earth and other nearby stars inadvertently too. More than 150 impact craters have been discovered on the Earth so far. The Qur'an illustrates this terrible natural phenomenon in the following words:

51) Don't they observe the skies and the earths both before and behind them? If we wish we shall cause the earth to swallow them or cause some fragments of the sky to fall on them too. Indeed, there is a sign in it for every servant who returns in repentance.<sup>84</sup>

The term 'fragments of the sky' bears a perfectly meaningful conformity to such solar system debris as the comets, asteroids, and meteorites etc. with whose felling or making the Earth to swallow them that the disbelievers are being warned to be punished with here. Besides, while cautioning the inhabitants of the Earth against this potential punishment, the statement, 'Don't they observe the skies and the earths both before and behind them?', is requiring us to learn from the innumerable earths all around that have already been dealt deadly blows through such harsh punishments. It could, thus, be imagined as to how forcefully the current passage is strengthening our contention concerning the figurative use of the terms 'fliers' and 'the ones contracting their wings while flying apace' discussed earlier.



#### 4 Reality of Man

Man was hitherto thought to have existed merely on our present outlying habitation of this amazingly vast and exceptionally ancient universe through a particular lineage and for the past few thousand years alone. Now, when the Qur'an itself is broadening the sphere of the philosophy of human creation in the light of the modern empirical knowledge and it is reasonably being established that he has been given similar existence on innumerable other earths of all the seven skies as well, we shall consider afresh the related Qur'anic statements scattered all through it and strive to uncover and piece together the other related features of this developing philosophy and unravel some of the riddles associated with the present human race too. It declares thus:

52) How can you be ungrateful to the Almighty, whereas you were dead, thereafter he brought you back to life, thereafter he will cause you to die, thereafter he will bring you back to life again, and thereafter you shall be returned to him?<sup>85</sup>

This verse is the continuation of the one discussed under statement no. 24 wherein the current human race in general was addressed to affirm that similar other races too had been given existence on the Earth prior to ourselves and that it is only after obliterating them that we are also being tested here. As such, the address here too is general in nature. Thus, the passage 'whereas you were dead, thereafter he brought you back to life' enlightens us that



earlier to our present lives, we were dead, and it was only a while after keeping us in the state of death that we have been brought back to life. At the outset, let us remember that 'dead' is the antonym of 'alive,' which leads to the query as to the meaning of this death and our state prior to it in the same manner as we had argued upon the death of the earths earlier that it accrues only to those that were alive previously and that lifeless beings cannot be said to be dead. The subsequent phrase 'he brought you back to life' too reinforces this contention as it directly contrasts the causing of death, and, thus, cannot be, as interpreted by the predecessor exegetes, indicative of our coming into existence from the state of non-existence according to any stretch of imagination. The more appropriate expression for articulating this condition would, however, be: 'he created you.' Moreover, the life after our imminent death too is being described here with the same set of words as 'thereafter he will bring you back to life again.'

Besides, subsequent to our death and prior to being resurrected on the Day of Judgment, the passage 'thereafter he will bring you back to life again' states that we would be bestowed with life again, raising the question as to the identity of that life. It has to be born in mind here that merely the subsequent statement of 'you shall be returned to him' itself includes in it the meaning of getting raised on the Day of Judgment and returning to the Almighty, which could be discerned from the following three statements too:

52.1) Every soul shall taste death, thereafter shall you be returned to us.<sup>86</sup>

52.2) It is he who brings you back to life and causes you to die, and to him shall you be returned.<sup>87</sup>

52.3) Say: "The angel of death appointed over you shall cause you to die, thereafter you shall be returned to your Lord."<sup>88</sup>

Razi too has preferred this mode of interpretation. Moreover, the adverb 'thereafter' (*thumma* in Arabic), used in between 'he will bring you back to life again' and 'you shall be returned to him,' once again denotes sequence of two events as well as the existence of time interval between each of them. This suggests that there exists a period between our regaining of life and returning to the Almighty again, whereas there exists no evidence of such a break between both of these events that day; the moment the trumpet is sounded, all dead beings rise from their graves and rush towards the Almighty instantly:

52.4) When the trumpet is sounded, they shall rush from the graves towards their Lord all of a sudden.<sup>89</sup>

This once more indicates that we shall again be bestowed with life before the Day of Judgment. And, by skipping the mention of our compulsory death consequent to our subsequent life and directly stating our return to the Almighty through 'thereafter you shall be returned to him,' it is being implied that it is not at all intended to narrate the sequence of events concerning the full cycle of human life here. Besides, the apparent ambiguity present in this verse is being effectively explained in the subsequent five verses too, which shall be dealt with later in this chapter.

Basing their argument upon the verse under discussion, the predecessor exegetes have, however, inferred two lives and two deaths for man: the first of the deaths being our state of non-existence, whereas the second of them is the one that would accrue to us consequent to our present lives. Similarly, our first life is the one we are currently into, and the second of them being the one that pertains to the Hereafter. They have argued from the following verse in support of their contention:

52.5) They shall say: "Our Lord! You caused us to die twice and brought us back to life twice, we do confess our sins. Is there a way out then?"<sup>90</sup>

This will be the constant cry of the disbelievers who would implore the Almighty along these lines on the Day of Judgment in order that he gives them another opportunity to reform themselves, whereas the believers too have been quoted to make another statement on the same day which confines the number of lives to just one:

52.6) Aren't we going to die except for our first death, and wouldn't we be punished?<sup>91</sup>

This, in turn, raises the question as to why should one base himself upon the statement of the disbelievers at the expense of the believers themselves in arriving at the number of lives a person is bestowed with? The fact of the matter, however, remains that none of these two statements could be considered to be true as another of our lives, the one when the Almighty took the Covenant from us concerning his lordship after he brought us forth from the back of Prophet Adam (pbuh), is also well-established:



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52.7) When your Lord brought forth from the backs of the children of Adam their races and made them bear witness upon their own souls asking, "Am I not your Lord?" "Indeed," they replied, "we bear witness." *We did this lest you should say on the Day of Judgment, "We were unaware of this."*<sup>92</sup>

It is very much obvious that the Covenant was taken from us in our live and conscious state. Whatever the nature of that life might have been, it has to be considered as life only, as otherwise one would not be obliged to fulfill his pledge. It has to be born in mind at this stage that it is the quantity of lives that is the subject matter of discussion here, rather than their quality and nature. Besides, man is destined with yet another sepulchral life as well, as is evident from the following verse that speaks of the sort of punishment the people of the Pharaoh are being meted out in their graves, and others could also be presumed upon them:

52.8) They are being exposed to the fire morning and evening, and when the Day of Judgment come to pass it shall be ordained, "Admit the people of Pharaoh into the severest punishment."<sup>93</sup>

It is evident here too that the present sepulchral punishment is being administered to the disbelievers only in the state of their life and consciousness so that they taste the flavor of their deeds, as punishment to the dead beings is just pointless. Thus, a total of four lives (viz. Covenantal, worldly, sepulchral, and of the Hereafter) and three deaths (viz. after the Covenant, worldly, and sepulchral) are clearly recognized for all human beings through the Qur'an itself from the earliest period. If merely two lives and two deaths are acknowledged then it would amount to negating the remaining two lives and a death and resorting to various figurative interpretations in their identification at the expense of the literal denotation of the Qur'anic statements, which the commentaries are abound with. It should also be remembered here that the verse signifying our state of non-existence is the following one, rather than the one that is under discussion:

52.9) Doesn't man remember that we have created him before when he wasn't even anything?<sup>94</sup>

It is very much clear now that 'dead' and 'wasn't even anything' cannot be said to be one and the same. In view of all these explicit Qur'anic

assertions, thus, it may rightly be inferred that the verse under discussion is indefinite in nature and cannot be restricted with either statement nos. 52.5 or 52.6. It would rather be more appropriate to consider them to be the respective inferences of the disbelievers and the believers themselves. As such, we have met with our previous death consequent to another worldly life preceding it, and shall again be bestowed with yet another one consequent to the impending death and prior to the advent of the Doomsday. It cannot, however, be assumed that our previous life pertains to that of the Covenant and the forthcoming to be the sepulchral one, as the compulsory sepulchral death too would have been mentioned here then. It is a well-acknowledged fact that man would be in the state of unconsciousness and death in the intervening period between the initial sounding of the all-annihilating trumpet and the advent of the Day of Judgment consequent to its sounding for the second time:

52.10) When the trumpet is sounded, all those who will be in the skies and all those who will be in the earths would loose their consciousness except for those whom the Almighty pleases. Thereafter, when it is sounded again, they would be standing and looking on all of a sudden.<sup>95</sup>

The following three statements too substantiate our argument even further:

53) It was he who brought you back to life, thereafter he will cause you to die, and thereafter he will bring you back to life again; man is, indeed, ungrateful.<sup>96</sup>

The striking similarity of expression between the previous statement and the current one could be noticed. The passage 'he brought you back to life, thereafter he will cause you to die, thereafter he will bring you back to life again' is common at both these places. Besides, each of these statements equally calls upon man to be grateful to the Almighty Lord too. It is also evident from the generic noun 'man' that the address here as well is general in nature, and both the classes of the believers and the disbelievers alike are meant with it. Man is, thus, being urged to be grateful to the Creator Lord by reminding him of the fact that it is he who has brought him back to life from the state of his previous death and that it will again be he who would grant him another life in the future as well. It may now be pondered if our



forthcoming life will precisely be the one that pertains to the Hereafter, then how can the disbelievers be implored to express their gratitude to it, as nothing would be in store for them that day apart from absolute deprivation and loss. With the same logic, it cannot be the sepulchral life either. This too suggests that our subsequent life cannot be the one that pertains either to the sepulcher or the Hereafter. Hence, the present expression 'man is, indeed, ungrateful' is further interpreting and casting new light upon the true import of the statement 'thereafter he will bring you back to life again' both in the present as well as the previous statements. When the immediate context of the present statement is considered in detail later on, this contention would be strengthened even further.

54) That it was he who caused to die, thereafter brought back to life. And that it was he who created the pair of male and female from semen, when emitted. And that it is upon him the other creations too.<sup>97</sup>

It is evident from this expression that here too the whole philosophy of the creation and devastation of the entire humanity is being related in third person in a very marvelous fashion, similar to the one contained in statement no. 52, where it had been narrated in the first person. So, the passage 'whereas you were dead, thereafter he brought you back to life' there is being interpreted with 'it was he who caused to die, thereafter brought back to life' here. The 'dead,' therefore, is the one who has met with death in the state of life, which fairly testifies to our contention under statement no. 52 with regard to it being the opposite of 'alive.' This once again suggests that our earlier state of death wasn't in any way that of our non-existence, but we had met with death consequent only to our previous life.

Besides, the phrase 'the other,' which is appearing as the adjective of *al-nash'a* (creation) here, contrasts 'one,' and is used only to distinguish between each of a pair of things from the other. Thus, when another of our lives prior to the present one is also being established according to the present statement itself, the subsequent one cannot be said to be 'the other creation.' The following assertions too strengthen our contention even further:

54.1) It is he who has created you from a single soul...<sup>98</sup>

54.2) ...He knows you the best when he created you from the earth and when you were embryos in the wombs of your mothers...<sup>99</sup>

The first of these two verses concerns our earliest creation from the back of Prophet Adam for the purpose of the Covenant, whereas the second of them pertains to another of our former creations from the earth. We shall, for now, be content with adopting just the literal meaning of the latter verse and would elaborate upon the nature of the life it is implying later in this chapter. So, two more of our former lives are being established through these verses as well. In view of them too, our subsequent life cannot be said to be the 'other creation.' Moreover, 'creation' cannot be, as the earlier exegetes had inferred from it, the apt expression to represent our resurrection on the Day of Judgment; it literally denotes the coming into existence from the state of non-existence, whereas we are supposed to be taken out from our graves that day according to the statement no. 52.4 above. In view of all these contentions, thus, we could safely and convincingly conclude that *al-nash'a* has appeared as a plural noun in its generic form in the phrase 'the other creations' here. It could now be pondered as to how significantly the present statement is interpreting statement no. 52. If the passage 'you were dead' there is being elucidated through 'it was he who caused to die' here, 'thereafter he will bring you back to life again' is also being clarified through 'it is upon him the other creations too.' This once again establishes that we had been alive prior to our present lives and would also be recreated again before the eventual advent of the Doomsday.

55) Every soul shall taste death, thereafter we shall severely test you by evil and by good, and thereafter you shall be returned to us.<sup>100</sup>

It could be noted as to how harmonious the current verse is with the one contained in statement no. 52 and how efficiently it is elucidating the apparent ambiguity present therein. So, all the three subsequent stages of the human lives enumerated there sequentially through *thumma* (thereafter) are being similarly spelt out through another Arabic particle *wa* denoting the same meaning. It should be remembered that this latter particle also denotes sequence of two events as well as the existence of time interval between them in the same way as the former, which is evident from the following passage too:

55.1) ...We shall return him back to you, and thereafter make him a messenger too.<sup>101</sup>



This verse concerns the divine commandment given to the mother of Prophet Moses immediately after his birth directing her to cast him, whenever she feels threatened by the army of Pharaoh, into the river with the promise of restoring him back to her and later on, when he grows up to an adult, bestowing on him prophethood too. So, the passages 'thereafter he will cause you to die' and 'thereafter you shall be returned to him' there are similarly being expressed as 'Every soul shall taste death' and 'thereafter you shall be returned to us' respectively here. In between these two passages, however, if it is said 'thereafter he will bring you back to life again' there, it is very meaningfully being expressed as 'thereafter we shall severely test you by evil and by good' here. This very fairly establishes that the present expression has deliberately been advanced to elaborate the brevity present in the former verse. Remember, *fitna* and *ba'la* are both verbal nouns in the Arabic bearing the uniform meaning of 'testing,' and it is for this reason that the former has also been repeated irregularly after the verb *nablookum* instead of the latter in order to provide the extra stress to this verb and convey the multiplicity of its occurrence too. We have already witnessed another instance of this usage in statement no. 40 as well. This statement, thus, very stunningly enlightens us that it is not only one more worldly life that awaits us prior to that of the Hereafter, but we would be tested both by good and by evil severely many more times as well! The current passage 'thereafter we shall severely test you by evil and by good,' thus, is effectively interpreting all the three previous statements of 'thereafter he will bring you back to life again,' 'man is, indeed, ungrateful,' and 'it is upon him the other creations too' contained in the earlier three statements respectively. Similarly, it is these three former passages that are conveying the fact of the particle *wa* having been used as a synonym of *thumma* in the current statement. All these four statements are, hence, mutually interpreting one another.

We will now consider the different aspects of this emerging new philosophy of the multiple creations of man thoroughly and strive to present them in a logical sequence for its better understanding. The former state of being of the present man as portrayed through the statements, 'you were dead' and 'it was he who caused to die,' is further being described by the Qur'an thus:

56) No habitation which we had destroyed before them came to believe

thereafter. How can they (i.e., the current disbelievers) believe then?<sup>102</sup>

It is evident from the passage 'the reckoning has got closer to mankind' appearing in the very first verse of the chapter to which the verse under discussion too belongs, that the discussion is consistently being carried out in the context of the entire humanity in all these verses. A similarity is, thus, being drawn here between the disbelievers of the current human race and those of the others that in the same way as the latter failed to repose faith in God the former too would end up committing the same error. Remember, 'habitation' in the universal perspective denotes an entire earth according to statement no. 12, to whose very context the present verse too belongs. It would appear from our discussion later on that all the initial twenty-odd verses of this chapter too are very cohesively bound together under a well-entrenched universal philosophy. So, any of the devastated earths of the universe could be meant with it here.

Two distinctive features of the extraterrestrial disbelievers have been mentioned here: first, they had been destroyed, and second, they didn't come to believe. It can also be effortlessly discerned from the phraseology employed here that their failure to belief was consequent only to their death and destruction. It is, thus, very much clear that either of these events pertains to their separate lives. In other words, when they were annihilated in their previous lives owing to their disbelief in God, they couldn't come to believe in their later lives as well. The terrestrial disbelievers are then being likened to those of the extraterrestrials to predict that they too, by following into their footsteps, cannot come to believe either. It has to be remembered that when a comparison is made between two things, it is always done with respect to some shared traits between them, which cannot be anything other than 'destruction' in the present case. That is to say that in the same way as the extraterrestrial disbelievers failed to come to believe in their subsequent lives after being destroyed previously, their terrestrial cousins too would behave similarly in their current lives as they too have been destroyed earlier! The current similitude could also be understood from the statement 'None of the patients whom Doctor X had prescribed medicine recovered, how can patient Y recuperate then?' This presupposes that the doctor has prescribed medicine to patient Y as well, as the entire similitude would be bereft of any meaning, otherwise. We shall also dwell upon both the preceding as well the succeeding



verses of the current statement later in this chapter, which shall reinforce our contention even further. Moreover, this very message is being propounded with recourse to an altogether different phraseology at another place in the following words:

57) Indeed, we have destroyed the habitations surrounding you, thereafter changed the signs to them repeatedly that they might turn back.<sup>103</sup>

This verse has already been mentioned under statement no. 30.2 to infer from it that our neighboring earths together with their inhabitants too have already been ruined. Besides, in view of the previous statement, here too the Arabic particle *wa* has been used as a synonym of *thumma* in line with statement no. 55 to mean 'thereafter.' So, contrary to the previous statement, a direct mention is being made here in absolute terms that all the extraterrestrials surrounding us have, even after having been destroyed together with their abodes earlier, again and again been subjected to the divine call by repeatedly changing the signs of providence to them.

It could now be pondered as to how accurately each and every word of this statement is coinciding with those of the previous one and explaining the apparent ambiguity present therein. If the terrestrial disbelievers were likened to those of the extraterrestrials there, here too the same neighboring aliens are the subject of discussion. Both of them too convey their death and destruction through the divine punishments as well. Then, if it was stated there that they didn't come to believe in divinity ever in their subsequent lives consequent to their destruction in their previous lives, their inability to belief is being expounded at length here that various divine signs have time and again been revealed upon them in the hope that they might abandon the path of disbelief and return to spirituality some time. Besides, the fact of the usage of the particle *wa* as a synonym of *thumma* here too could only be ascertained from the previous statement. This reveals that both these statements are mutually interpreting each other.

When the past lives of the disbelievers are being established, then those of the believers themselves are also necessarily proved with the same logic. The disbelievers have, however, been singled out with special mention as our later discussion would convincingly reveal that it is only they whose trial is essentially intended and upon whom the divine wrath falls, whereas the

believers are saved of this ignominy all the time. It, thus, very well establishes that our former state of death was that which ensued to us consequent to an intelligent and accountable life previously! Now, the sort of strategy resorted to for the subsequent regeneration and testing anew of the destroyed habitations could be ascertained from the following eight wide-ranging statements:

58) It is forbidden for a habitation which we have destroyed that they shall not return.<sup>104</sup>

'Habitation' in this verse too has occurred as a common noun similar to the one under statement no. 56, and, hence, any of the earths of the universe could be meant with it. It is now evident that in the same way as the inability of the disbelievers to belief and faith under any circumstance was expressed continually through the past two statements in the context of all the earths of universe, their destruction and subsequent return are being discussed in similar context here too. It should be particularly noted that statement no. 56 was concerned with the beginning of the chapter 21 of the Qur'an, with whose ending the current statement is related to, which casts new light upon their mutual association and reciprocal consolidation. It is, thus, being proclaimed in very clear terms that it is forbidden for any of the inhabitants of any previously destroyed earths of the universe that they shall not return. And when their not returning is forbidden, returning becomes just compulsory. Though the nature of their returning and its place haven't explicitly been spelt out here, the eloquence of expression, however, reveals that the 'return' of these destroyed nations has precisely been used in opposition to their previous 'death.' 'Returning' directly acquires the meaning of 'life,' thus. That is to say that all the destroyed nations of the universe are compulsorily returned alive once more. And when the place of their returning has deliberately been kept concealed here, we shall deem it to be this material universe itself, as it is more plausible in this perspective to consider it to be the very place from where they were made to exit earlier. Each and every destroyed nation of this universe would again be made to return to this universe, thus, through a new life and tested compulsorily. Basing upon the literal denotation of the present verse, Razi too has argued upon this probability. But, by arguing that no such event has ever come into our direct observation, he went on to carry out various interpretations concerning the true purport of the current statement.



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It is, thus, very much obvious that the apparent difficulty in the comprehension of both the previous statements is being resolved through the current one to state that the incapacity of the previously destroyed nations to belief as mentioned there is only when they return to this universe again by way of an altogether new life. The nature of their subsequent return to this universe is being described in the following words thus:

59) Haven't they observed as to how many a race have we destroyed before them, which do not return towards themselves?<sup>105</sup>

We have dealt with this verse under statement no. 21 as well to infer that all the human races stated in it to have been destroyed even before us were those that pertained to the previous live phases of our own Earth. So, one of the basic characteristics of these races is that once they are annihilated from here, they do not return towards themselves, i.e., their own Earth. Now, when the return to this universe again of all the previously destroyed nations of the Earth is compulsory, and when this doesn't happen towards themselves, it must only be towards some other earths. Moreover, this reality isn't concerned merely with the Earth alone, but is common to virtually all the other earths as well; every human race given existence on one of them and subsequently annihilated from there would proceed towards another of them for its successive life. The following statement just articulates this precise probability in our very own context thus:

60) O Mankind! You are the ones who stand in need of the Almighty, whereas it is he who is above all needs and worthy of all praise. If he so desires, he will carry you away and bring in a new creature. That isn't difficult for him.<sup>106</sup>

From 'O Mankind' it is clear that humanity in general has been addressed to in these verses. Besides, 'carry away' is the antonym of 'bring in,' through whom a possibility is being expressed in very real and absolute terms that the present human race might be carried away and another race would be made to replace it, which would be an entirely new creature to the Earth. It is obvious that if we are to be taken away to a new abode it will only be after our annihilation from here. And the probability of bringing in others to replace us suggests that they too would be exterminated from their respective habitations first. This is merely the expression of a possibility, but being

sourced from the Almighty himself, it definitely carries numerous insights in it. In fact, a considerable part of the intellectual and scientific marvel of the Qur'an is contained precisely in such of these probabilities, hints, and metaphors that are transformed at other places into absolute facts through spectacular change of expression. The present probability, for instance, could also be comprehended in the light of the statement no. 38 where it had been stressed in very clear terms that consequent to their prospective deadly phases generally all the earths of the universe would certainly be revived once again. When all the earths are to be brought to life for another time, it is a foregone conclusion that new creatures would again be given existence in them, which transforms this probability into a definite fact. Besides, the use of the more distant pronoun 'that' instead of the nearer and more appropriate 'this' in the passage 'That isn't difficult for him' with reference to the current probability of carrying away and bringing in of human races carries in it a subtle insight that there is nothing unique in it and that it is realistically a well-established and age-old divine tradition.

It could now be observed that if all the four previous statements talked about the multiple creations of merely the disbelievers, the current one encompasses the entire humanity. It, thus, substantiates our contention made under statement no. 57 in this regard. This very probability has been expressed on another occasion thus:

61) Whosoever is in the skies and whosoever is in the earths belongs to the Almighty alone, and suffice is he to carry through all affairs. If he so desires, he will carry you away, O Mankind, and bring in others. Surely, the Almighty was capable of that *before too*.<sup>107</sup>

The relative pronoun *ma* appearing in the original Arabic text to denote 'whosoever' here is used, as corroborated under statement no. 11.2, in relation to the intelligent beings too. So, a possibility is again being expressed here that we could be carried away and some others would be brought in to replace us. But the respective places that were kept concealed in the previous statement as to where could we be carried away from here and others would be brought in to replace us are being implied through the passage 'Whosoever is in the skies and whosoever is in the earths belongs to the Almighty' that they are, in fact, the different earths of the universe themselves. Thus, we could



be exterminated from here to be taken away to a new earth and others would be obliterated from their respective habitations to be brought in to replace us over here through fresh lives. And the message that was driven home through 'that' in the previous statement is being reiterated again in the current one through 'Surely the Almighty was capable of that.' It is, thus, being conveyed here that the Almighty is effecting the change of abodes of his creatures routinely through fresh lives. The following assertion is expressing quite the same probability through a different turn of phrase and interpreting both the current and the previous statements thus:

62) We have ordained death among you, and we are not to be outstripped in replacing you with your likes and recreating you there of which you have no knowledge. You have certainly known the first creation, why don't you remember then?<sup>108</sup>

Observe the astonishing similarity of expression between 'he will carry you away and bring in a new creature' and 'he will carry you away, O Mankind, and bring in others' contained in the previous two statements and 'we are not to be outstripped in replacing you with your likes and recreating you there of which you have no knowledge' appearing in the current statement. Thus, 'he will carry you away' in both the previous statements is being interpreted here with 'recreating you there of which you have no knowledge' to clarify that it is, in reality, giving us another existence on some other earth we are unfamiliar with. This subsequent life, however, cannot be the one that pertains to the Hereafter, since we would not be, as argued under statement no. 54, recreated but only taken out from our graves then. Besides, the present passage speaks of bringing in some other race to replace us after our elimination from here, whereas no such things happens on the Doomsday as the entire universe is obliterated then in accordance with statement nos. 41.3 & 41.4. Consider now the following statement which transforms these probabilities into a definite fact thus:

63) It is we who have created them and strengthened their joints, and we shall repeatedly replace them with their likes whenever we please.<sup>109</sup>

This verse has already been dealt with under statement no. 40 wherein it has been established that many more of the present type of human races would certainly be made to follow us in succession over here as *i'za* (whenever) is

a conditional particle that is used in relation to an event whose occurrence is a certainty. Now, when the second probability of bringing in others to replace us on the Earth as contained in all the preceding three statements is being accorded the shape of a definite reality through the current statement, then the first of them of carrying us away to another earth too transforms into the same degree of certainty, as the occurrence of the former possibility rests solely on that of the latter; unless we check out, others cannot come in to replace us.

Besides, both the adjectives of 'their likes' and 'your likes' appearing in the current and the previous statements respectively concerning those who would follow us on the Earth in turn interpret 'a new creature' and 'others' contained in the two statements immediately preceding them. It, thus, reveals that they too would be humans themselves. It is now very much obvious that they also would be exterminated from other earths first before being brought in over here. We too were given existence on some earth earlier, and would be taken to another earth later on. All these facts clearly establish that all the extraterrestrials are different human races themselves and strengthen the general principle laid down in this regard in the second and the third chapters.

When it is conclusively being established through so many varied statements that man is repeatedly being created and tested in more than one earth of the universe, we shall now explore many more of such assertions and place them in proper perspective to gain further insights from them in this regard:

64) So, when the trumpet is sounded, that would be a harsh day. It may not be easy for the disbelievers. Leave me with the one whom I had created alone. Whom I had given ample wealth, sons present by his side, and provided him with beds excessively. Yet he is eager that I provide him with still more. Never! He was, indeed, opposed to our signs. I shall afflict him with hardship soon.<sup>110</sup>

It is evident that all the verses contained in this statement are together making an extremely coherent statement. The very first verse is revealing that it pertains to the events that shall unfold on the Day of Judgment consequent to the sounding of the second trumpet. The past tense 'was' in the passage 'He was, indeed, opposed to our signs' towards the end of this statement too substantiates this contention further. Whereas, the verse 'It may not be easy



for the disbelievers' discloses that generally all the disbelievers are meant here, rather than any particular individual. Besides, 'Leave me with the one whom I had created alone' too further corroborates this line of reasoning, which clearly indicates that the entire dialogue is being carried out in the context of all the disbelievers through a singular noun in its generic form. Thus, when the address is general in nature, any particular circumstance of the revelation of these verses cannot in any way be relied upon. Nor could the characteristics mentioned here be fully attributed, as has been popularly narrated, to the notorious adversary Walid Ibn Mugheera. This is because such an enemy of the divinity who took an overzealous pride in his material accomplishments cannot simultaneously plead with the Divine Being himself for a further boost in them, which is being reported through 'Yet he is eager that I provide him with more.'

A question, thus, arises as to what the disbelievers are stated to be pleading with the Almighty for an increase in it on the Day of Judgment that is being declined so vehemently here? Obviously, the disbelievers do not long for any wealth or offspring that day. Nor does the denial of material benefits to them by the Almighty is established in any manner in the worldly life either. In fact, it is these very people who are bestowed with such temporal benefits abundantly in order to test the believers with. On the contrary, if they desire anything that day, it would only be their return to this world again and getting another opportunity to reform themselves. This cry of the disbelievers finds a mention at another place thus:

64.1) If you should see them when they are made to stand before the Fire. They will then say, "Ah we wish we were returned *to the world again*, and we shall not belie the signs of our Lord, and shall be among the believers."<sup>111</sup>

In view of all these arguments, it is clearly evident that here too this very eagerness of the disbelievers is being mentioned through the expression, 'I had provided him with beds excessively. Yet he is eager that I provide him with still more.' It should be noted that *mahada* in Arabic is a verb, meaning 'to make or provide bed,' whereas *mah'd* or *mihad* are nouns from the same root and both denote bed or cradle. The following verses are the respective instances of their usage:

64.2) Haven't we made the earths beds?<sup>112</sup>

64.3) He it is who has made the earths beds for you...<sup>113</sup>

In the statement under discussion the verb *mahada* has appeared in its derived form *mah'hada* to denote multiplicity of its occurrence, and its verbal noun *tam'heed* too has accompanied it to provide extra emphasis to it. The original expression *Mah'hat'tu lahu tamheeda*, therefore, means 'I have provided him with beds (i.e., earths) excessively.' It is obvious that provision of multiple earths for man is a metaphorical form of conveying the reality of his multiple creations. It is for this reason that in response to the eagerness of the disbelievers 'Ah we wish we were returned *to the world again*, and we shall not belie the signs of our Lord, and shall be among the believers' contained in statement no. 64.1 it is being astonishingly enquired here through 'Yet he is eager that I provide him with still more' as to how can they yearn for another life when they have already been bestowed with so many of them. The similarity of expression between the eagerness of the disbelievers 'we shall not belie the signs of our Lord' and the divine rebuke to them 'He was, indeed, opposed to our signs' should also be taken into account, which too implies that the present statement is in response only to this eagerness of the disbelievers. The following statement reinforces this contention even further:

65) If you were to ask them as to who has created the skies and the earths, they would certainly say that they have been created by the very mighty and the all-knowing being who has made the earths beds for you and made in them paths for you in order that you may be guided.<sup>114</sup>

The phrase 'the skies and the earths' conveys that 'earth' has been used in its generic form here too and that all the earths of all the seven skies are meant with it. In this very context, and in continuation of the same speech, its appearance in the subsequent verse as well is consistent with the same usage. The passage 'he has made the earths beds for you,' thus, reveals that virtually all the earths contained in all the seven skies have been made beds for us!! It could now be observed as to how astonishingly similar and mutually interpreting are the current passage and the one 'I had provided him with beds excessively' contained in the previous statement; if the true import of the latter passage is being convincingly revealed by the former, the latter too discloses that 'earth' has been used in its generic form in the former.



Besides, 'He it is who has made the earths beds for you' appearing in statement no. 64.3 too conveys the same fact of all the earths of the universe having been made beds for us without the customary 'skies' accompanying them. This once again reinforces the principle laid down under the first chapter that 'earth' has generally been used as a generic noun in the Qur'an. Moreover, the last phrase of the current statement 'and made in them ways for you in order that you may be guided' shall be dealt with in detail later in this chapter, which would shed more light upon our present contention. Thus, if the previous statement conveyed the fact of the provision of multiple abodes particularly to the disbelievers, the current one articulates the same with respect to the humanity as a whole.

When all the earths contained in all the seven skies have been made beds for man, it necessarily flows from it that he would be given existence and tested in all of them consecutively through multiple lives. Consider now the following eight more statements that drive home this reality with recourse to varied expressions:

66) He it is who has created the skies and the earths in six days when his Throne was upon water in order to test you as to which of you is better in conduct. Yet, if you tell them, "You would be raised after death," the unbelievers would at once say, "This *Qur'an* is nothing but a clear magic."<sup>115</sup>

Obviously, the address in this verse is general in nature with respect to the entire humanity. Also, the phrase 'the skies and the earths' once again reveals that all the earths of all the seven skies are meant here too. This point is further being reinforced by the six-day creation account, which comprises, as stated earlier too, the formation and coming into existence of all the natural phenomena in existence today. So the phrase 'in order to test you' with respect to the fundamental aim behind the creation of all the earths of all the seven skies quite clearly reveals that they have specifically been created for the purpose of our testing alone. It is for this reason, therefore, that it is subsequently wondered as to how could the disbelievers dispute the raising of the dead when they have been destined with so many of the lives and they have already spent some of them too. In other words, the denial of resurrection on the Day of Judgment by the disbelievers is being contradicted with the fact

of their own multiple creations here.

67) He has subjected to you from him whatsoever is in the skies and whatsoever is in all the earths. There are, indeed, great signs in it for a people who reflect.<sup>116</sup>

In this passage too the address is general in nature. Besides, 'earth' in the context of 'skies' conveys that it has once again been used as a generic noun. Furthermore, the word *jamee* (all) is also accompanying it along the lines of the verse mentioned in statement no. 1 to lay additional emphasis upon the fact that virtually all the earths of all the seven skies are meant here. It, thus, yet again establishes that virtually all the earths of the universe have been made subservient to us, which in turn sheds ample light upon the true purport of their creation merely for our testing as contained in the previous statement.

68) Whosoever is in the skies and whosoever is in the earths belongs only to Him. Indeed, it is the Almighty who is above all needs and worthy of all praise. Don't you observe that the Almighty has subjected to you all that is in the earths and the ships too sailing in the sea by his command, and he withholds the skies as well from falling upon the earths except with his assent? Surely, the Almighty is compassionate and merciful to the people. It is he who has brought you back to life, thereafter he will cause you to die, and thereafter he will bring you back to life again; man is, indeed, ungrateful. To every nation we have assigned a place they are familiar with; so, let them not argue with you in this regard. Call them, *O Mohammed*, to your Lord; you are surely on the right path. And if they quarrel with you, then tell them, "The Almighty knows the best what you are doing." The Almighty shall adjudicate between you in whatever you are differing on the Day of Judgment. Don't you know that the Almighty knows whosoever is in the skies and the earths? Indeed, it is in the Book. Surely, it is easy for the Almighty.<sup>117</sup>

Extreme coherence is to be found between all the seven verses of this statement too. So, the phrase 'The skies and the earths' in the very first verse conveys that virtually all the earths of all the seven skies are the subject matter of discussion here again. If the subjugation to us of all the earths of the universe was expressed directly in the previous statement, the same message is being put across indirectly in the current statement through 'Don't you



observe that the Almighty has subjected to you all that is in the earths' by first arguing upon the generic nature of the 'earth.' It is to further reinforce this fact that many of our former and later lives in these earths are being related in the very next verse through 'It is he who has brought you back to life, thereafter he will cause you to die, and thereafter he will bring you back to life again; man is, indeed, ungrateful,' which has been considered thoroughly under statement no. 53. In the subsequent verse as well the fact of each and every human race having been given existence through regeneration in one or the other earths of the universe is being reported through 'To every nation we have assigned a place they are familiar with.' It should be noted that the Arabic word *man 'sak* used here literally denotes a 'familiar place,' which has also been quoted from the predecessors too. And it is natural for it to imply an entire earth in the present universal setting similar to 'habitation' and 'abode' earlier. This is the reason why the believers are instructed through the holy Prophet not to enter into an argument with those who disagree on this account and subsequently questioned through 'Don't you know that the Almighty knows whosoever is in the skies and the earths?' whether the Almighty wasn't giving the information of the celestial world on account of his absolute knowledge encompassing all of them? Besides, 'Indeed, it is in the Book' conveys that all the details of the natural world do find a mention in the divine Book.

69) Indeed, the Almighty knows what is hidden in the skies and the earths, and is well aware of what lies in the hearts. It is he who has made you successors on the earths. So, whoever disbelieves, the consequence of his disbelief would be upon him; their disbelief will only increase hate for the disbelievers in the sight of their Lord; their disbelief will only lead the disbelievers to greater loss. Say, "Have you considered your associates whom you invoke apart from the Almighty, show me which of the earths have they created or what share have they in the skies?" Or have we given them a book whose clear signs they are basing themselves upon? Nay, what the unjust are promising one another mutually is nothing but pure deception. Indeed, the Almighty has grasped the skies and the earths lest they move away. If they do move away, there would be none to take hold of them other than him. Surely, he is ever forbearing, forgiving.<sup>118</sup>

All the four verses of this statement as well are connected with each other

coherently. So, the phrase 'the skies and the earths' in the very first verse enlightens us that all the earths of the universe are meant here too. Besides, this very phrase has repeatedly been mentioned in the middle as well as towards the end of the statement to reinforce this contention even further. And right in the midst of this talk of the earths in their generic form, the statement 'It is he who has made you successors on the earths' very clearly reveals that we would be made to succeed in all of them consecutively. Thus, the current passage is shedding ample light upon the true import of the earths having been created only to 'test' us and have been 'subjected' to us as contained in the previous three statements. This is the reason why the polytheists are called upon in the very next verse to show, in support of their perception, as to which of the earths of the universe have been created by their own deities other than the Almighty himself. Note further the similarity of expression contained between the current statement and the previous one, which once again points to the consistency of their denotation; after enlightening us with the reality of all the earths of the universe having been subjected to us, if we were quizzed in the previous statement as to whether the Almighty didn't know the inside of the skies and the earths, the current statement itself has been commenced with the statement that he knows what is hidden in all of them.

70) He it is who has created for you all that is in all the earths, then he turned towards the skies and organized them (i.e., the earths) in the seven skies. And he has the absolute knowledge of everything.<sup>119</sup>

This verse appears immediately following the one contained in statement no. 52, and has been advanced essentially in support of the claim of the former and the latter lives of man claimed there. It could, thus, very well be inferred from it that 'earth' appears in its generic form here too, which is also being reinforced with the use of *jamee* (all) yet again. We have witnessed this latter usage on a couple of more occasions under statement nos. 1 and 67 as well. And yet another argument in support of this contention is the pronoun 'them' in the phrase 'organized them,' which has no other noun to designate barring the 'earth.'

Consider now as to how striking is the similarity, both literal as well as meaningful, between the current statement and the one contained in statement no. 4 and how mutually interpreting are they with regard to the apparent



ambiguities present in either of them. On both of these occasions the statement concerning the creation of the universe has been split into two: one concerned with the events prior to the turning of the Almighty to the skies, and the other, with those subsequent to it. In either of these instances only the creation of the earths has been mentioned prior to the turning of the Almighty to the skies. If 'earth' had appeared in the former instance in its singular form, it has been emphasized and interpreted in the latter with 'all' to drive home the reality that there too it has appeared in its generic form. Then, subsequent to the turning of the Almighty to the skies, the entire conversation being carried out in relation to all the skies and all the earths in their generic forms at both these places has suddenly and amazingly been changed to their plural forms and conveyed that all the earths have been secured and organized in all the seven skies. Besides, the similarity of address between them is extremely meaningful too. If the disbelievers have been addressed through 'Can you be ungrateful to him who has created the earths in two days' in the former statement, this very tribe is the addressee in the latter as well through 'How can you be ungrateful to the Almighty.' It has to be born in mind here that only the disbelievers have been singled out with a special mention in both these occasions merely to quiz them as to how could they disbelieve in such a being who has created all the earths of the universe for their testing, otherwise humanity in general is the addressee here too in line with the earlier statements. Thus, when the objective behind the creation of all the earths has been declared in the latter statement through the phrase 'for you' to be our testing alone then the same purpose holds good concerning the former too, where its mention has very meaningfully been omitted.

71) You can frustrate *him* neither in the earths nor in the skies, and you shall have no friend or helper besides the Almighty.<sup>120</sup>

'Earth' in the context of 'sky' once again reveals that both of them are appearing here as generic nouns to mean all the earths and the skies in existence. Thus, in view of all the statements made continuously for the past five statements it is now irrefutably established that the true import of we having been provided with excessive beds and all the earths of universe having been made beds for us is nothing but giving existence to us in all of them too. The following statement too underlines this reality in a different idiom:

72) Blessed is he in whose hand is the kingdom, and who has power over everything. Who created death and life in order to test you as to which of you is better in conduct, and he is all-mighty, all-forgiving. Who created seven skies one above the other as layers; you shall not see any discrepancy in the creation of the merciful. Return your gaze, do you see any fissures? Then, return your gaze again and again, it comes back to you dim and drowsy. And we have adorned the nearest sky with a few lamps, made them the weapons to pelt the devils with, and have prepared the punishment of intense fire for them. And for those who disbelieve in their Lord will be the punishment of Hell – a miserable destination.<sup>121</sup>

The present chapter, 'The Kingdom,' as stated under statement no. 32, truly characterizes its name, and the very objective behind the creation of the universe and the divine kingdom encompassing all through it have been related in it in an extremely amazing style. So, just as the multiple births and deaths of all the earths of the universe were depicted touchingly in the later half of this chapter there, here in its former half too, this very reality is being expressed in a universal setting with reference to man himself. Hence, after particularizing the whole of the universal kingdom to the Almighty in the very first verse, it is being followed with the statement that the purpose of the creation of death and life is to enable the Almighty to test humans as to which of them would be better in conduct, whereas the disbelievers have been warned in the sixth verse with the divine punishment through 'for those who disbelieve in their Lord will be the punishment of Hell.' Thus, all the three intervening verses between them are parenthetical expressions. Now, a peculiar question arises as to the reason behind the assertion of the flawless creation of the seven skies one above the other right in the middle of a structured statement concerning the testing of the believers and disbelievers. This question assumes added significance given the fact that the statement of the testing of man has immediately followed that of the divine kingdom encompassing all the seven skies itself. It has also to be considered very closely at this point that in a very meaningful change of expression the statement of death has irregularly preceded that of life to be immediately followed by two of the most vital attributes of the all-mighty and the all-forgiving concerning God. It can, thus, be inferred from it that the present statement of the death and life cannot in any way be said to be irregular in its



occurrence, but it has deliberately been employed to convey the far-reaching reality that in the realm of testing man would be continued to be provided with ever never lives subsequent to his deaths in the earths of all the seven skies too, and that all of this is being done solely on the basis of the dual qualities of might and forgiveness of the Almighty. This is because if the mere act of giving existence to man in the earths of all the seven skies is suggestive of the immense might of the Almighty, the very fact of the multiple creations of man is indicative of his other quality of forgiveness with which he overlooks the misdeeds of the disbelievers and provides them the chance of rectification repeatedly.

Consider the striking similarity between the current statement and the one contained in statement no. 66 as well. The passage 'in order to test you as to which of you is better in conduct' has uniformly been repeated on both these occasions. Then if the realm of this testing was declared there through 'It is he who has created the skies and the earths in six days' to be all the seven skies and the disbelievers in the life after death were wondered at, here too the same sphere is mentioned through 'Who created seven skies one above the other' with the positive statement of the life after death. It could, thus, be inferred from it that the same reality is being expressed through two different expressions in these statements. This fact gets further reinforced through the following statement through which the provision of food to man from all the skies and the earths as well is being mentioned:

73) Say, "Who provides you food from the skies and the earths?"<sup>122</sup>

Thus, when it is conclusively being established that the present human race is bound to be given existence and tested in all the earths of all the seven skies, then, with the same logic, the same thing holds good for the other human races inhabiting all the remaining earths as well. Particularly statement nos. 56-58 are common to all the races of the universe as well. In this manner, the steady process of elimination of all the human races of the universe from their respective abodes and relocating them to the other habitations in the form of new races is in full force and would continue to be so in the future as well.

It appears really pertinent to this humble writer to try and resolve an extremely sensitive and vital issue concerning this evolving concept of the multiplicity of human creation. He is quite sensibly convinced that this

budding universal philosophy cannot blossom unless the true nature and the rightful place of the father of humanity, Prophet Adam, are put in the right perspective. Now, when it is irrefutably established in varied idioms through the last 22 statements that the children of Adam are repeatedly being given existence all through the universe, and that all the earths of all the seven skies have been created for their testing alone, then the succession of Adam itself encompasses the entire universe indirectly. We, however, need to establish this aspect as well directly from the Qur'an itself and put to rest the misgivings, if any, in this regard. So, the succession of Adam has been described by the Qur'an in its beginning itself in the following words:

74) He it is who has created for you all that is in all the earths, then he turned towards the skies and organized them (i.e., the earths) in the seven skies. And he has the absolute knowledge of everything. And when your Lord said to the angels, "I am placing a successor in the earths," they said, "Will you place therein the one who would spread corruption and shed blood, while we proclaim your praise and glorify you?" He said, "I definitely know what you do not know." Thereafter he taught Adam all the names, then presented them unto the angels, and said, "Tell me their names, if you are truthful." They said, "Glory to you! We do not know apart from what you have taught us. Surely, you alone are the all-knowing, all-wise." He said, "O Adam, tell them their names." So, when he told them their names, he said, "Didn't I tell you that I did know what is hidden in the skies and the earths and also knew whatever you have been disclosing and whatever you were concealing?"<sup>123</sup>

Remember, the current statement is appearing in support of our former and later lives as contended through the immediately preceding verse that has been dealt with under statement no. 52. So, it is being corroborated in the very first verse of the current statement, as established under statement no. 70, that virtually all the earths of all the seven skies have been created for our testing alone. When 'earth' is appearing in its generic form in the immediately preceding verse it is very much obvious that it is corresponding to the same usage in the subsequent and extremely coherent verse 'I am placing a successor in the earths.' It, thus, reveals that the succession of Adam is being described here in the context of all the earths of the universe, rather than our own single one. Besides, imparting to Adam the knowledge of all the names



as well is very meaningful, as the phrase 'all the names' in its absolute form includes virtually all the names in existence. And when used in the context of all the seven skies, it receives additional emphasis. This too suggests that Adam was groomed for the succession of the universe as a whole by first acquainting him with the knowledge of every thing it contained.

It can now be observed that the entire statement being made in the context of all the earths in their generic form continuously is once again spectacularly being changed in the end to 'the skies and the earths' in the passage 'Didn't I tell you that I did know what is hidden in the skies and the earths,' which is in response to the objection of the angels to the creation of a successor in the universe. This too suggests that the current statement is being made in the context of all the earths of the universe and that the succession of Adam encompasses them all. In reality this later statement is the detailed account of the brief one 'I definitely know what you do not know' made in the second verse in response to the same objection of the angels. Thus, both of these statements could easily be interchanged to imply "And when your Lord said to the angels: 'I am placing a successor in the earths,' they said: 'Will you place therein the one who would spread corruption and shed blood, while we proclaim your praise and glorify you?' He said: 'I do know what is hidden in the skies and the earths.'" It is obvious that if at all the objection of the angels was concerned with Adam succeeding just one single Earth, the Almighty wouldn't have broached the subject of the hidden secrets of the entire universe then. So, the methodology employed and the initiative taken in realizing this universal succession of Prophet Adam could be ascertained through the following three statements:

75) When your Lord brought forth from the backs of the children of Adam their races and made them bear witness upon their own souls asking, "Am I not your Lord?" "Indeed," they replied, "we bear witness." *We did this lest you should say on the Day of Judgment, "We were unaware of this."*<sup>124</sup>

This verse pertains to the occasion when the Almighty took the Covenant from all the human beings concerning his lordship. It is obvious from this statement that the descendents brought forth from each of the different children of Prophet Adam cannot merely be one race but have to be multiple in numbers — one from each of them. So, it can literally be discerned from

it that rather than one single race from the back of Adam multiple races from the backs of several of his children were brought into being originally. It is now a self-evident truth that the races of the children of Adam are in turn his own children too. Thus, the foremost creation of the human beings is being split into two distinct phases: in the first phase the children of Adam were created, whereas in the second one the different races of these children were brought forth. In this manner, a separate progenitor is established for every race, and Adam becomes the grand progenitor of them all. This very well suggests that all these races were brought into being from Adam in view of his own universal succession so that they may successively be given existence in the various live phases of all the earths of all the seven skies. Besides, this enormous scheme of things includes even the multiple creations of man as to who should be created in whose progeny and who should be made the progenitor of whom.

It may not be out place to mention herein that the Covenant had become an extremely contentious issue between the scholastic philosophers of Islam and the rationalist sect Mo'tazila during ancient scholastic period. The raging controversy then was as to why we do not remember such a significant event of our past life presently. The Mo'tazila were vehemently opposed to subscribing to any event which we do not remember. Thus, they denied the Covenant outright, considering it to be merely an allegorical expression. Besides, the alien concept of the incarnation of spirits too had crept into the Islamic circles to a large extent. The scholastic philosophers were of the firm view that had our spirits been in some other bodies earlier too, we would definitely have remembered the events of those previous lives in the present life as well, so they argued against reincarnation. This made the Mo'tazila to once again challenge the scholastic philosophers to negate the Covenant as well with the same logic. This almost silenced the latter, and they were compelled to take such a feeble and defensive position that the period of the Covenant didn't last for too long to enable us to remember it, whereas the continuous events that take place over a long period of time cannot disappear from our memory in any way. For a detailed account of these and other contentions, particularly Razi's commentary of Qur'an could be referred.

But, the moot point here is as to why should one remember the Covenant in the current life? Had it been in our memory still, how significant and



meaningful the doctrine of 'belief in the unseen' could have been then? The principal argument of the disbelievers against the religion itself is that there cannot be life after death, man has appeared in this world spontaneously without any outside intervention, and he would decay and perish after his death. Had the Covenant been in our memory even now, would there have been any disbeliever in the life of the Hereafter? Everyone would have been a believer then, and such terms as testing, belief, and disbelief would have lost their total significance. The following statement reinforces this argument even further:

75.1) If you should see them when they are made to stand before the Fire. They will then say, "Ah we wish we were returned *to the world again*, and we shall not belie the signs of our Lord, and shall be among the believers." Whereas, what they were concealing earlier has become manifest to them. And even if they were returned, they would certainly go back to what they were prohibited from; they are certainly liars.<sup>125</sup>

These verses are depicting the events of the Hereafter when the disbelievers would be taken to the verge of the hell and they would have witnessed the fire in person and even tasted a bit of it too. At this moment, on the wish of the disbelievers that they be returned to the world again and provided with another opportunity to reform themselves, it is being responded by the Almighty himself that even if their request is fulfilled they would remain addicted only to what they had been doing earlier! It can now be pondered if those events of the Hereafter had been in their memory still, could they have dared to commit the same mistake again? This very well suggests that the events of one life are caused to be forgotten in the subsequent one for the purpose of testing, nevertheless they still remain in their subconscious. Man would only get to know all the former and later deeds he has carried out only on the Day of Judgment. The following statements openly convey this very reality in the following words:

75.2) Man would be made to know that Day what has he done earlier and what he shall do subsequently. In fact, man would be witness to himself, even though he would offer excuses.<sup>126</sup>

75.3) The Day when all the mysteries would be revealed.<sup>127</sup>

Many more of such Qur'anic statements would be presented in different

perspectives in due course, which would shed more light upon the subject and strengthen this contention even further. Now, in consideration of his own universal succession, when many human races have been brought into being in the progeny of the sons of Prophet Adam on the occasion of the Covenant, it flows from it that our present human race too should have descended from merely one of his sons. The following statement proclaims exactly the same reality unequivocally thus:

76) Your Lord is above all needs and merciful. If he so desires, he will carry you away and cause whomsoever he pleases to succeed you, just as he has originated you in the progeny of another people *having brought you in from somewhere*. Whatever you are being promised is sure to happen, and you cannot frustrate *the Almighty*.<sup>128</sup>

Obviously, the address here is general in nature in the context of the humanity as a whole. This fact is further being emphasized through statement nos. 60-61 where exactly the same probability of carrying away of the entire current human race and bringing in another one to replace it was expressed through "O Mankind." In fact, these are the live precedents of the principle 'A part of the Qur'an interprets another one.' In the first verse, hence, a possibility is being expressed that we could be carried away to another place and some others would be brought in to replace us over here in the same way as we had been created in the progeny of another people earlier. And through the passage 'Whatever you are being promised is sure to happen, and you cannot frustrate *the Almighty*' it is added that this is not a mere possibility, but a promise to be fulfilled in future. This shows that the present humanity has originated only in the progeny of some other people. That is, it hasn't originated directly from Adam, but only indirectly from him.

Besides, the comparison through the phrase 'just as' reveals that it is only after carrying away the previous inhabitants of this earth to some other location that we have been brought in from another abode to be originated here again in their own progeny through a new progenitor. It is now obvious that all the races to be given existence in all the earths, being the progeny of Adam, must only be humans. But, as every race enjoys a separate progenitor, and it is highly probable that they might even differ in the other details as well, it is natural to consider each one of them to be a new creature. Furthermore,



the divine attribute of 'merciful' too should be considered as to how repeatedly it is accompanying the mention of the multiple creations of man.

77) The Almighty has chosen Adam, Noah, the house of Abraham, and the house of Imran above all the worlds. They are all the descendents of one another...<sup>129</sup>

A *'lam* in Arabic always appears as a plural, without a singular. The predecessors too had meant with it all the creatures in existence aside from God. Nevertheless, if every species of the universe is considered as a separate world in itself, it takes a plural as a *'lameen* as in the present case, which we have translated here as 'all the worlds.' This term, thus, includes in its ambit all that exists in all the seven skies. The following three different statements too strengthen this argument even further:

77.1) All praise be to the Almighty, the Lord of all the worlds.<sup>130</sup>

The very first chapter of the Qur'an, the Opening, contains the essence of the entire Book itself wherein all its teachings have been sagaciously condensed into a few most comprehensive terms and phrases. So, the Almighty introduces himself to humanity through such an inclusive phrase as 'the Lord of all the worlds' in its very first verse, which happens to be the foremost verse of the Qur'an too. Now, as to what could be meant by 'all the worlds' has been described at another place through a similar expression thus:

77.2) All praise be to the Almighty, the Lord of the skies and the Lord of the earths, *i.e.*, the Lord of all the worlds.<sup>131</sup>

Here the latter phrase 'the Lord of all the worlds' has been used in apposition to the earlier one 'the Lord of the skies and the Lord of the earths,' which renders the meaning of 'all the worlds' to be all the skies and all the earths. It has also to be born in mind here that after mentioning the creation of all the skies and all the heavenly bodies contained in them under statement no. 4 too, their creator had been introduced as 'he is the Lord of all the worlds:'

77.3) Indeed, your Lord is the Almighty, who created the skies and the earths in six days, and then ascended the Throne. He covers the day with night in such a way that it pursues it swiftly. And he has created the sun, the moon, and the stars to be subservient by his command. Remember, it is for him to create and to command. Blessed is the Almighty, the Lord

of all the worlds!<sup>132</sup>

In contrast to the statement no. 4, the phrase 'the skies and the earths' has very explicitly been used in the current statement to indicate all the seven skies together with all of their constituents. This message is, then, being reinforced again with the six-day creation account. The creator of all these natural phenomena is, then, being introduced as 'the Lord of all the worlds.' In the light of all these arguments, thus, it is clearly evident that 'all the worlds' denotes all the seven skies and all the other heavenly bodies including the earths contained in them.

The expression 'The Almighty has chosen Adam, Noah, the house of Abraham, and the house of Imran above all the worlds,' therefore, signifies that all of them have been selected over others in the context of not only our existing human race but with respect to all those present in all the earths of all the seven skies as well! And as to how could this be possible is being elicited through 'They are all descendents of one another' in the subsequent verse. It has to be remembered that this later passage is appearing as a circumstantial clause, and in the same way it applies to Prophet Noah, the house of Prophet Abraham, and the house of Imran it also compulsorily applies to Prophet Adam too. Thus, Adam too happens to be a descendant in the universal context under the philosophy of the multiple creations of man. It is logical too that when the children are being provided with multiple lives, why shouldn't their father be. Hence, apart from his very first special creation in the Heaven, whenever he is born again, he would be born from the womb of a mother to be a descendant of another person. That is to say that the position of Adam is simultaneously that of the progenitor of mankind as well as a descendant of his own descendants! This reality, thus, pertains to those rarities concerning Adam himself that consequent to his descent from the Heaven full brothers and sisters were compelled to be married off with each other initially for the purpose of procreation. Every couple then was simultaneously husband and wife and brother and sister too.

It should also be born in mind here that there are many more people in this selection in the universal context still. Only a few have been enumerated here, as the fundamental aim of the current statement is merely the affirmation of the filial character of Adam. The selection of others too is stated on other occasions, otherwise. For instance:



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The very first chapter of the Qur'an, the Opening, contains the essence of the entire Book itself wherein all its teachings have been sagaciously condensed into a few most comprehensive terms and phrases. So, the Almighty introduces himself to humanity through such an inclusive phrase as 'the Lord of all the worlds' in its very first verse, which happens to be the foremost verse of the Qur'an too. Now, as to what could be meant by 'all the worlds' has been described at another place through a similar expression thus:

77.2) All praise be to the Almighty, the Lord of the skies and the Lord of the earths, *i.e.*, the Lord of all the worlds.<sup>131</sup>

Here the latter phrase 'the Lord of all the worlds' has been used in apposition to the earlier one 'the Lord of the skies and the Lord of the earths,' which renders the meaning of 'all the worlds' to be all the skies and all the earths. It has also to be born in mind here that after mentioning the creation of all the skies and all the heavenly bodies contained in them under statement no. 4 too, their creator had been introduced as 'he is the Lord of all the worlds:'

77.3) Indeed, your Lord is the Almighty, who created the skies and the earths in six days, and then ascended the Throne. He covers the day with night in such a way that it pursues it swiftly. And he has created the sun, the moon, and the stars to be subservient by his command. Remember, it is for him to create and to command. Blessed is the Almighty, the Lord

of all the worlds!<sup>132</sup>

In contrast to the statement no. 4, the phrase 'the skies and the earths' has very explicitly been used in the current statement to indicate all the seven skies together with all of their constituents. This message is, then, being reinforced again with the six-day creation account. The creator of all these natural phenomena is, then, being introduced as 'the Lord of all the worlds.' In the light of all these arguments, thus, it is clearly evident that 'all the worlds' denotes all the seven skies and all the other heavenly bodies including the earths contained in them.

The expression 'The Almighty has chosen Adam, Noah, the house of Abraham, and the house of Imran above all the worlds,' therefore, signifies that all of them have been selected over others in the context of not only our existing human race but with respect to all those present in all the earths of all the seven skies as well! And as to how could this be possible is being elicited through 'They are all descendents of one another' in the subsequent verse. It has to be remembered that this later passage is appearing as a circumstantial clause, and in the same way it applies to Prophet Noah, the house of Prophet Abraham, and the house of Imran it also compulsorily applies to Prophet Adam too. Thus, Adam too happens to be a descendant in the universal context under the philosophy of the multiple creations of man. It is logical too that when the children are being provided with multiple lives, why shouldn't their father be. Hence, apart from his very first special creation in the Heaven, whenever he is born again, he would be born from the womb of a mother to be a descendant of another person. That is to say that the position of Adam is simultaneously that of the progenitor of mankind as well as a descendant of his own descendants! This reality, thus, pertains to those rarities concerning Adam himself that consequent to his descent from the Heaven full brothers and sisters were compelled to be married off with each other initially for the purpose of procreation. Every couple then was simultaneously husband and wife and brother and sister too.

It should also be born in mind here that there are many more people in this selection in the universal context still. Only a few have been enumerated here, as the fundamental aim of the current statement is merely the affirmation of the filial character of Adam. The selection of others too is stated on other occasions, otherwise. For instance:



77.4) We have chosen them (i.e., the children of Israel) above all the worlds knowledgeably.<sup>133</sup>

77.5) We guided Ishmael, Elisha, Jonah, and Lot, and favored them over all the worlds.<sup>134</sup>

This suggests that many more persons too have been selected in the universal context, out of which only some of those with whom we are currently familiar with find a mention here. The previous four statements, thus, establish in very clear terms that the succession of Prophet Adam encompasses all the seven skies, due to which innumerable human races were brought forth from him, and out of which only one is the current race of the Earth. In this manner, he becomes the grand progenitor of them all, and he too continues to be reborn in the progeny of his own descendents. There is, thus, every probability that the progenitor of our present race is the very Adam who has descended from another progenitor, or this place of pride could belong to any one other than him as well. Hence, the present statement 'The Almighty has chosen Adam...above all the worlds' is literally interpreting the earlier one 'I am placing a successor in the earths' contained in statement no. 74.

We shall now advance this philosophy even further and consider the strategy employed with regard to the multiple creations of man:

78) Say, "To whom belongs whoever is in the skies and the earths?" Say, "To the Almighty." He has prescribed mercy for himself. He shall certainly keep gathering you until the Doomsday, of which there is no doubt. Yet those who have inflicted loss upon their souls shall not come to believe.<sup>135</sup>

The phrase 'whoever is in the skies and the earths' once again indicates that all the creatures inhabiting the earths of all the seven skies are the subject matter of discussion here too. So, the passage at issue here is 'He will certainly keep gathering you until the Doomsday.' In view of the apparent difficulty found here, nearly all the exegetes of the Qur'an have interpreted the original Arabic particle *e'la* figuratively to be 'on' instead of the literal 'until' and translated the entire phrase as 'He will certainly gather you on the Day of Judgment.' However, there is no such difficulty today in considering it in its literal sense, as the current statement is a major milestone and a

significant link in the developing modern Qur'anic philosophy of the universe. Now, as to what could be meant by this gathering of ours is to be found at another place thus:

78.1) Among the signs of his *providence* is the creation of the skies and the earths and the animals that he has scattered through them, and he is capable of gathering them whenever he wishes.<sup>136</sup>

This verse has been dealt with under statement no. 9 too. It could, thus, be noticed as to how analogous the current verse is with the previous one and how meticulously it is interpreting it. It is obvious from the phrase 'the skies and the earths' that the creatures inhabiting the entire universe are the subject matter of discussion at both of these places. On each of these occasions, the fact of their gathering is also being expressed in very express terms. If the whole of the current human race of the Earth was addressed in the previous verse to state that it would certainly continue to be gathered until the Doomsday, the same message is being conveyed with the same degree of conviction in the present one and with respect to all those given existence in all the earths of the universe. Besides, the original Arabic *i'za* (whenever) in the current verse is a conditional particle, which is used with respect to an event whose occurrence is a certainty. It, thus, reveals very clearly that this act of gathering is, in reality, the intermingling of all the creatures of the universe. As such, all these creatures together with those of our own would regularly be gathered and tested on the different earths of the universe through newer lives until the Doomsday. That is to say that no creature of any earth is given existence on another earth in its entirety for its subsequent life, but all of them would be splintered and scattered on different earths so that the resulting new race of every earth should be the gathering and assortment of many of the other previously extinct races of the universe. Both of these verses too are once again making a categorical declaration that the all-encompassing Doomsday isn't in store for us in the near future.

It could also be gathered from the expression 'He has prescribed mercy for himself' on this occasion that the bestowal of multiple lives upon mankind is purely on account of the mercy of the Almighty so that the disbelievers are provided with repeated opportunities of reformation and faith by overlooking all their previous acts of defiance. It should also be born in mind here that on



a couple of more similar occasions earlier under statement nos. 72 and 76 too, the same message has been given through 'he is all-mighty, all-forgiving' and 'Your Lord is above all needs and merciful' respectively. This is the reason why it is being asserted after the declaration of the continuous gathering of the creatures through so many lives until the Doomsday here that those of the men who have already inflicted loss upon their souls by disbelieving in God in their previous lives shall never come to believe in him subsequently. This is also the very fact conveyed under statement no. 56 that all those habitations that were destroyed earlier couldn't come to believe ever thereafter. This suggests that the current statement is interpreting and reinforcing that statement too. Consider now the following statement which is expounding this perpetual stubbornness of the disbelievers in another idiom thus:

78.2) Until when death approaches to one of them, he will say, "My Lord, send me back again so that I may do righteous deeds in what I have left behind." *He would then be replied*, "Never, it is but a word he is uttering, whereas there would always be a barrier in front of them until the Day when they would be resurrected."<sup>137</sup>

The first part of this statement is depicting the condition of every disbeliever at the advent of his death that he always desires another opportunity to reform himself. The moot point here is the last part that appears in reply to this desire. It is evident from the expression 'Never, it is but a word he is uttering,' thus, that rather than concerning with his returning back to the world again, this negation is related to him engaging himself in righteous deeds after his returning. That is to say that his present desire is nothing but a lie because he would continue to remain in his stubbornness even then. Remember, this is the precise message that has already been conveyed in statement no. 75.1 through the passage 'And even if they were returned, they would certainly go back to what they were prohibited from; they are certainly liars.' This is the reason why this reality is further being strengthened immediately through 'whereas there would always be a barrier in front of them until the Day when they would be resurrected' that the disbelievers would never come to believe again howsoever lives they are bestowed with until the Doomsday, let alone merely one more life. The following two statements speak of the existence of this very barrier in their present lives too:

78.3) We have raised a barrier before them and a barrier behind them and covered them, so they do not see. It is alike to them whether you warn them or do not warn them; they shall not come to believe.<sup>138</sup>

78.4) The Almighty has sealed their hearts and ears, and there is a veil on their eyes...<sup>139</sup>

It has to be born in mind here that we have translated the original Arabic word *bar'zaq* appearing in statement no. 78.2 as a 'barrier' in its literal sense. It has appeared at another two places in the Qur'an in chapters 25:53 and 55:20 as well to convey the same denotation. Contrary to these two latter occasions, the predecessor exegetes had, however, meant it in the statement under discussion to be the conventional intervening period between the death and the resurrection, and argued upon just one worldly life. Whereas, the same statement is, in the light of our present organized discussion, conveying a vital aspect of the multiplicity of human creations and their continued gathering between the skies in an exemplary style. This is the reason why the present antagonism of the disbelievers is being described at other places as nothing new but very ancient one:

78.5) ... In fact, those who do not believe are in torment and far-away (i.e., ancient) error.<sup>140</sup>

78.6) ... Indeed, the unjust are in far-away opposition.<sup>141</sup>

The following verses too reinforce our contention further:

79) When our Clear Signs are being recited to them, they do not have any other argument aside from saying, "Bring back our forefathers *to life*, if you are truthful." Say, "the Almighty is bringing back to life you *too*, thereafter he will cause you to die, and thereafter he will keep gathering you until the Doomsday, of which there is no doubt." Yet most people do not know. To the Almighty belongs the kingdom of the skies and the earths, and when the Doomsday occurs, the liars shall stand to lose.<sup>142</sup>

Observe as to how significantly the disbelievers are being countered here, on their demand that their forefathers be brought back alive as a Prophetic miracle, with the statement 'the Almighty is bringing back to life you *too*.' Furthermore, they are also being conveyed that apart from bringing all the dead back to life once again, they would repeatedly be given ever newer lives



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and continue to be gathered on different earths of the universe before the final occurrence of the all-encompassing Doomsday. The phrase 'Yet most people do not know' very clearly conveys that most of the people are ignorant of this reality of their multiple creations and their constant gathering between the skies, as all this is being done in an unconscious manner in order to test them.

Besides, the statement 'To the Almighty belongs the kingdom of the skies and the earths' in the context of this gathering once again reveals that the place of gathering would be the different earths of the universe. Moreover, another argument in favor of the original Arabic particle *e'la* to be 'until' in its literal sense in the phrase 'until the Doomsday' both in the current statement and the previous statement no.78 as well is the phrase 'and when the Doomsday occurs' appearing in the very next verse of the current statement. So, if the first phrase is accepted to be 'on the Day of Judgment' then the second phrase 'and when the Doomsday occurs' would be rendered absurd and meaningless. The Clear Signs said to be recited to the disbelievers here provide another argument in support of our present contention, which we shall deal with at length in the next chapter. Now, the following four more statements cast further light upon this philosophy of the multiple creations of man and his continued gathering between the skies:

80) Whosoever is in the skies and the earths sings the praise of the Almighty, who is the all-mighty, the all-wise. To him belongs the kingdom of the skies and the earths; he brings back to life and causes to die; and he has power over everything. He is the first and the last, the evident and the hidden, and he is well-informed of everything. It is he who has created the skies and the earths in six days, and then ascended the Throne. He knows whosoever is entering the earths and whosoever is getting out of them, and whosoever is descending from the skies and whosoever is ascending in them; he is with you wherever you may be, and he sees whatever you are doing.<sup>143</sup>

It is well too evident from the repeated mention of the phrase 'skies and the earths' and also with the six-day creation account that a dazzling depiction is being made here concerning the divine kingdom comprising all the seven skies and the earths contained in them. It is, thus, being conveyed here that if someone is entering the earths, some other is getting out of them, and that if someone is descending from the skies, some other is ascending in them. The

sequence of this narration should also be kept in mind that the one entering the earths has taken precedence over the one getting out of them, and similar is the case with the one descending from the skies in relation to the one who is ascending in them. This very well suggests that the one entering the earths is the same who is descending from the skies, and the one who is getting out of the earths is the same who is ascending in the skies. The identity of this being, however, has been kept concealed here. But, the immediately subsequent passage 'he is with you wherever you may be' very meaningfully reveals that this is none other than we humans ourselves. That is to say that all the members of the extinct races of every earth of the universe are being given existence and continuously gathered on the other earths for their subsequent lives. All those being given existence on our present earth, for instance, are descending on it from different celestial earths, and the members of the previously extinct races of this earth are, in return, continuously being made to ascend and given existence on different earths of the universe. Every new race of every earth would, thus, be a gathering and assortment of some of the other partial extinct races of the other earths of the universe. It should particularly be noted here that all the earths of the universe are in themselves skies or heavenly bodies in relation to any given earth; both Earth and Mars are, for instance, heavenly bodies to each other. Besides, the very next phrase 'he is seeing whatever you are doing' conveys that this celestial gathering of the humans is being done in their state of life and responsibility. The present statement is, hence, further strengthening and casting new light upon the nature of this gathering.

The stunning similarity of expression between the present assertion and the one enumerated under statement no. 66 should also be kept in mind, which also offers another argument in favor of the existence of a meaningful concordance between them. If the reality of the creation of all the seven skies and the earths contained in them was conveyed through the passage 'It is he who has created the skies and the earths in six days when his Throne was upon the water' there, here too the same message was put across through 'It is he who has created the skies and the earths in six days, and then ascended the Throne.' And if the objective behind their creation was briefly stated there to be the testing of man through 'in order to test you as to which of you is better in conduct,' the same purpose is being expressed at length in the present



statement through 'He knows whosoever is entering the earths and whosoever is getting out of them, and whosoever is descending from the skies and whosoever is ascending in them; he is with you wherever you may be, and he sees whatever you are doing.' Likewise, the concurrence between the present statement and statement no. 72 should also be considered. The very fact of the divine kingdom encompassing all the seven skies and the earths expressed there through 'Blessed is he in whose hand is the kingdom' is being spelt out here through 'To him belongs the kingdom of the skies and the earths.' This very well establishes that if the present statement is elaborating upon the brevity present in statement no. 66, it is also communicating the same message given under statement no. 72 in another idiom. Besides, the following statement too reinforces this contention even further:

81) All praise be to the Almighty to whom belongs whosoever is in the skies and whosoever is in the earths; to him belongs the praise in the Hereafter; and he is all-wise, all-knowing. He knows whosoever is entering the earths and whosoever is getting out of them, and whosoever is descending from the skies and whosoever is ascending in them, and he is all-merciful, all-forgiving. Yet, the disbelievers say, "The Domsday will not strike us."<sup>144</sup>

All the three verses of this statement too are very coherently connected with each other. It is very much obvious from the passage 'whosoever is in the skies and whosoever is in the earths' that here too a statement is being made in the context of all the celestial creatures on the lines of the previous statement. Similarly, the passage 'He knows whosoever is entering the earths and whosoever is getting out of them, and whosoever is descending from the skies and whosoever is ascending in them' is also being reiterated once again. But the passage 'he is with you wherever you may be' there has been substituted here with 'to the Almighty belongs whosoever is in the skies and whosoever is in the earths' in the beginning itself to put across the same point. And in order to further reinforce this message, two of the divine attributes of 'all-wise' and 'all-knowing' are also being appended here. Thus, the first of them reveals that there exists some profound wisdom behind the dispersal of human beings in all the earths of the universe, whereas the second of them discloses that the Almighty is well aware of all their affairs too. And it is based on this knowledge and awareness that it is being informed in the

immediately subsequent verse that he has the absolute knowledge of their continuous movements between the different earths of the universe. Thus, 'all-knowing' appearing in the fag end of the first verse is immediately being explained with 'He knows' in the very beginning of the second verse, and both these verses are being intertwined with each other very meaningfully to state that those ascending and descending back and forth from the skies are none other than the human beings given existence extensively all through them. Besides, the mention in this context of another two of the fundamental attributes of 'all-merciful' and 'all-forgiving' concerning the Almighty assumes greater significance, as they reveal the philosophy behind the multiple creations of man and his continued gathering between the skies. As stated earlier too, the divine wisdom behind this strategy is merely to provide the disbelievers with repeated opportunities of reformation and repentance and a level playing field through a variety of lives at different places in the universe, which is due only to the merciful and forgiving nature of the Almighty. Consider once again statement no. 78 above wherein the same mercy of the Almighty was stated through 'He has prescribed mercy for himself. He shall certainly keep gathering you until the Domsday' to be the reason behind this gathering between the skies. This too reveals that the same message is being imparted with a change of expression here as well. This is the reason why it is immediately wondered through "Yet, the disbelievers say, 'The Domsday will not strike us'" as to how could the disbelievers now say that the Domsday will not occur and that man would never be resurrected again when they have already been made to die and brought back to life again and again on so many occasions earlier too. Thus, those who refute resurrection are once again being countered with the fact of their own multiple creations here too along the lines of statement no. 66.

82) We shall raise those who have belied our signs step by step without even them realizing it. I continue to give them respite; indeed, my scheme is deep-rooted. Didn't they reflect that there is no madness in their companion; he is merely a clear warner. Didn't they ponder over the kingdom of the skies and the earths, the things the Almighty has created, and that perhaps their own term *too* has drawn to a close? In what discourse will they believe after this *Qur'an* then?<sup>145</sup>

All the four verse of this statement too are logically correlated with each



other. So, the rationale behind the step by step raising of the disbelievers is said to be giving a temporary respite to them in accordance with a very deep-seated divine strategy here. This sheds ample light upon the actual meaning of this sort of raising. Now, as to what could be the true import of giving this continued respite to the disbelievers could be ascertained through both the previous statement as well as statement no. 78, where the very principle underlying their continuous gathering between the skies was stated to be the divine attributes of mercy and forgiveness, on account of which their wrongs are continuously overlooked and they are provided with repeated opportunities of reformation and faith. Besides, if it is mentioned in the current statement that the disbelievers are being raised in such a way that they do not realize it, the same message has been conveyed through 'Yet most people do not know' in statement no. 79 that most people have absolutely no knowledge of their gathering between the skies. It is, thus, very much clear that the step by step raising of the disbelievers is nothing but the metaphorical expression of giving existence to them on different earths placed one above the other in accordance with the philosophy of the constant gathering of humans between the skies as established continuously through the previous four statements. This is the reason why it has subsequently been argued through 'Didn't they ponder over the kingdom of the skies and the earths' to assert that the steady process of elimination of different human races from their habitations and their elevation to other celestial abodes for their subsequent lives is well under way through out the length and breadth of the universe. And this is why it is immediately affirmed through 'perhaps their own term has drawn to a close' that in the same way as our present human race has migrated to this earth from some other one in the past, time might be ripe for it to pack up and get relocated to yet another place: "and we are not to be outstripped in replacing you with your likes and recreating you there of which you have no knowledge."

It has also to be remembered here that the entire talk of this step by step raising is being carried out in the context of the disbelievers alone. We have, however, clarified earlier too that their singling out on such occasions is merely because the entire strategy of multiple creations of man is based wholly upon providing this very class a variety of opportunities of reformation and faith so that they should be left with absolutely no excuse in support of their faithlessness on the Day of Judgment, otherwise, all the humans in

general are also included in this divine scheme. The following statement too strengthens this contention even further:

83) You shall surely ride one layer after another. Then, what ails them that they do not believe, and when the Qur'an is recited to them they do not prostrate?<sup>146</sup>

It is very much obvious from the address here that it is general in nature. Besides, the phrase 'What ails them' reveals that it refers particularly to the disbelieving class alone. Thus, they are being astonishingly enquired here as to why they don't repose their faith in the Almighty even after they have been destined to ride one layer after the other. It also reveals that rather than the Hereafter, this riding pertains merely to the worldly affairs, as it is on its basis alone that the disbelievers are expected to repose their faith in the Almighty. Now, as to what could be meant by 'layers' can easily be ascertained through statement no. 3 wherein all the seven skies themselves have very clearly been assigned the same attribute:

83.1) Don't you observe as to how the Almighty has created seven skies one above the other as layers...<sup>147</sup>

Even according to Ibn Abbas and Ibn Masood, the learned companions of the holy Prophet, layers here could be the skies. They have, however, taken this address to be specifically to the holy Prophet alone to mean that he would ride all the seven skies one after another on *laila al-me'raj*, the night of his ascension to the heavens. But, as stated earlier too, when the address is general in nature, any specific circumstance of the revelation of any given verse cannot at all be relied upon. Nor do the words of the Qur'an used here support their contention. Besides, the striking similarity between the step by step raising of the disbelievers in the previous statement and their riding the layers one after another in the current one should also be born in mind. Likewise, if they have been admonished thereafter with 'In what discourse will they believe after this Qur'an then' there, here too they have been rebuked with 'Then, what ails them that they do not believe, and when the Qur'an is recited to them they do not prostrate?' Similarly, in statement nos. 56 and 78 too the disbelievers of one life have been stated to lack the capacity to belief in God in the rest of their lives. It can now easily be inferred in the light of all these contentions that the layers are nothing but the skies themselves, and



that the philosophy of human gathering between the skies is further being explained here too that man wouldn't only be given existence on the earths placed one above the other merely of the nearest sky, but those of all the seven skies as well. That is to say that when we are currently placed in the nearest sky, we are yet to be given existence and tested in the remaining skies as well!! This is also the very message given continually through statement nos. 65-73 that all the seven skies have been created with the purpose of testing man alone. The present statement is, thus, further interpreting and casting more light upon all those statements as well. Accordingly, it is clear from the current statement that both the believers and the disbelievers alike are very much the part and parcel of this grand scheme of multiple creations all through the seven skies, but it is basically the latter who are continued to be provided with all the possible opportunities of belief and faith in God through a range of lives. We shall now try and explore another strategy employed in this impressive universal phenomenon:

84) If you were to ask them as to who has created the skies and the earths, they would certainly say that they have been created by the very mighty and the all-knowing being who has made the earths beds for you and made in them paths for you in order that you may be guided.<sup>148</sup>

These verses have already been dealt with under statement no. 65 to establish that all the earths of all the seven skies have been made beds for us. Now, the moot point here is the paths that have been made in them for our guidance. They have been described at other places in the Qur'an as follows:

85) Don't the disbelievers observe that the skies and the earths were bound together before we split them, and made every living thing from water? Will they not believe then? We have placed stabilizers on the earths lest they should shake with them, and have made broad paths in them in order that they may be guided.<sup>149</sup>

The paths stated in the previous statement to have been made in all the earths of the universe for our guidance are also being described in the current statement as the broad ones. It has to be born in mind here that in the original Arabic text 'broad' is appearing as a circumstantial phrase to modify 'paths,' contrary to chapter 71:20, wherein it has appeared as an adjective. This mode of expression, according to the noted exegete and classical linguist

Zamakhshari, conveys that these paths have been broadened the very moment they were laid consequent to the creation of the earths. Other exegetes such as Razi, Baizawi etc. too have preferred this interpretation. Factually too this elucidation seems plausible, as a statement is being made here concerning the creation of these paths immediately after the creation of all the skies and the earths from the primordial matter.

86) He it is who has made the earths beds for you and entered in them paths for you...<sup>150</sup>

Here too, as detailed under statement nos. 64-65, 'earth' is appearing as a generic noun to indicate virtually all the earths of the universe. So, the phrase 'entered in them paths for you' is further describing these paths that they aren't in any way the internal roads of our earth laid by man himself but only the external ones that have been made to enter all the earths from outside. It, thus, reveals that when man has to travel from one earth to another earth and from one sky to another sky in this enormous philosophy of his continuous gathering between the skies and the earths, the very sequence in which he reaches each and every one of them to lead all the lives preordained for him is being described as his paths. Accordingly, every path passes through different earths of the universe, and the people associated with it continue to lead their lives in all of them one after the other. Besides, the passages 'in order that you may be guided' and 'in order that they may be guided' in the context of these paths too are extremely significant as the entire philosophy of multiple creations of man is based solely upon the concept of providing man with multiple and diverse opportunities of reformation and guidance to the ultimate reality. The following verse further refines this philosophy thus:

87) Indeed, we have created seven paths above you, and we are not unaware of the creatures *inhabiting them*.<sup>151</sup>

It is very much obvious from this statement that the seven paths located above us are the same human paths described in the previous statement to have been entered in all the earths of the universe from outside. This is the reason why it is immediately being stated that the Almighty isn't oblivious of the creatures dwelling in them. It also appears from this verse that when all the earths of the universe have been made beds for man for his testing, each person will not be given existence in every one of them, but all the earths have



been organised into seven broad paths and every person has been assigned merely one of them. Consider now the following verse which asserts that our nearest sky alone is composed of multiple paths:

88) By the sky of paths.<sup>152</sup>

The original Arabic term *hibak* used in this verse denotes the path which the wind momentarily creates in sand or water. As such, they are not real but only imaginary in nature. Thus, the present term is interpreting the paths appearing in the previous statements as well that they too are very much consistent with the same usage. Remember, the seven broad paths established through the previous four statements pertained to all the seven skies, whereas the paths being established through the current statement are related to our nearest sky alone. It could, thus, be inferred from this dual classification of paths that the former broader ones enjoy fundamental character, while the latter ones are relatively smaller and secondary in nature, having emanated from just our nearest sky. The Qur'an sheds further light upon the objective behind the creation of both of these types of paths at another place thus:

89) ... To every one of you we have made a path and a clear path. Had the Almighty wished, he would definitely have made you one nation, but he wishes to test you in whatever he has given you. So, hasten in good deeds...<sup>153</sup>

It is very much clear from 'to every one of you' that the address here is general in nature with respect to each and every individual of the present humanity. *Shir'a* and *minhaj*, which we have literally translated here as 'path' and 'clear path' respectively, have very contentiously been debated by the exegetes from the earliest period itself, and no agreement has been found between them as yet as to their actual import. However, this verse is quite in agreement with our ongoing discussion concerning the philosophy of the continued gathering of humans between the skies. It could, hence, be inferred from it that the path and the clear path made to each and every human being are the same celestial paths and the broad paths established continuously through the previous five statements. And it is for this reason that it is immediately being stated through 'Had the Almighty wished, he would definitely have made you one nation' that man wouldn't have been given

existence and dispersed all through the universe through multiple creations, and it would have sufficed God to accord just one collective life as one nation in order either to reward or punish him. And through 'but he wishes to test you in whatever he has given you' the fundamental aim behind the multiple creations of man is once again being articulated that this is in practice in accordance with a grand design of the Almighty to test man with assorted and diverse worldly lives so that he should be left with no justification on the Day of Judgment in support of his repeated defiance. The following verse reinforces this contention still further:

90) Every one has a direction towards which he is facing. So, hasten in good deeds. Wherever you may be, the Almighty shall bring you all together. Indeed, the Almighty has power over everything.<sup>154</sup>

It has to be remembered here that the current verse together with the immediately preceding two more of them is appearing as a parenthetical expression right in the midst of an organized discussion concerning the change in *qibla*, the direction of Muslim worship. The subject matter of our discussion now is only the present verse; its preceding two verses would be dealt with in the next chapter. It is apparent from the phrase 'To every one' here too that the address is, in line with the previous statement, general in nature with respect to each and every member of the current human race. The pronoun 'he' in its singular form too, which is designating 'every one,' is reinforcing this argument further. So, when a separate direction is being established for every human being, the current verse cannot be said to be related in any manner to its present context of one universal direction of worship for the Muslims as a whole. We were witness to many intellectual marvels of the Qur'an through the usage of such parenthetical expressions earlier too. Some of the predecessor exegetes as well have held the same view. Now, as to the true import of a direction for every person, the amazing similarity of expression between the current and the previous statements should be considered, which points to the consistency of their denotation: if the statement 'So, hasten in good deeds' followed the statement of the creation of a path and a clear path for every person in the previous statement, the same passage is repeated in the current statement too after the declaration of a direction to each of them. Remember, these are the only two places in the



entire Qur'an at which this expression has been used. Similarly, if the statement 'he is with you wherever you may be' appeared immediately after the mention of the continuous ascent and descent of man between the different celestial earths in statement no. 80, the same message is being conveyed in the current statement too through 'Wherever you may be, the Almighty shall bring you all together.' It, thus, very conclusively reveals that all these three statements are mutually interpreting each other and are together advancing the philosophy of the multiple creations of man and his continuous gathering between the skies. Accordingly, the direction here is nothing but the path and the clear path appearing in the previous statement. These human paths receive further emphasis through the following statement too:

91) Many ways have passed before you; so go across the earth and observe as to how was the end of the beliers.<sup>155</sup>

We have literally translated the Arabic noun *sunan*, the plural of *sunnah*, in this verse as 'ways,' which is synonymous with 'paths' too. When it has amply been established that many different human races have successively been given existence and ruined even before us on the Earth alone, and it has also been demonstrated adequately that those races had earlier been made to extinct from some other celestial earths before being given existence here and have subsequently been carried to still other earths for their successive lives, it can logically be derived from it that they too belonged to the different human paths prevailing in the universe. It is, thus, precisely this reality that is being articulated through the passage 'Many ways have passed before you' here. And it is to reinforce this contention still further that the people associated with these very ways are immediately being implied through 'so traverse the earth and observe as to how was the end of the beliers.' Remember, under statement no. 87 too the statement of the creation of seven human paths above us was similarly further described through 'and we are not unaware of the creatures *inhabiting them*.' It is also obvious from this verse that rather than merely a single human path, multiple paths do pass through every earth. The Qur'an casts further light upon this dual classification of paths on another occasion thus:

92) There is no animal on the earth whose nourishment doesn't rest with the Almighty, and he knows its places of longer and shorter dwelling.

Everything is in the Manifest Book. He it is who has created the skies and the earths in six days when his Throne was upon water in order to test you as to which of you is better in conduct. Yet, if you tell them, "You would be raised after death," the unbelievers would at once say, "This *Qur'an* is nothing but a clear magic."<sup>156</sup>

The last verse of this statement has already been discussed under statement no. 66 to establish that all the earths of all the seven skies have specifically been created for testing man in them. Literally speaking, both *Mustaqar* and *mustawda* appearing in the original Arabic text here are temporary places of dwelling. According to Razi, however, which has found favor with many other noted exegetes too, the former is more enduring than the latter. We have, thus, translated them as the places of longer and shorter dwelling respectively. Besides, *daabba* (animal), as established under statement nos. 9-10, comprises in its denotation humans too. The following verse serves as another instance of this usage, wherein it addresses them directly to state that they too enjoy both these types of dwellings:

92.1) He it is who has created you from a single soul. You, thus, have a place of longer and a place of shorter dwelling. We have, indeed, explained the signs to the people who understand.<sup>157</sup>

Thus, consequent to his descent from the back of Prophet Adam, the assertion of the existence of places of longer and shorter dwelling for every man is immediately being explained through the very next verse that all the earths of all the seven skies have been created for his testing alone. It is very much obvious, therefore, that these places of dwelling are associated with all the earths of the universe, rather than the present one earth alone. They are, thus, corresponding to the respective clear path and the ordinary path made to every human in skies. Accordingly, the place of longer dwelling for every man is the earths associated with the clear paths of all the seven skies and that of his shorter dwelling is the earths contained in the relatively smaller paths of just our nearest sky. This is the reason why it is immediately wondered through "Yet, if you tell them, 'You would be raised after death,' the unbelievers would at once say, 'This *Qur'an* is nothing but a clear magic,'" that when they have been destined and bestowed with so many lives, how can they dispute the resurrection and the Last Day then.



We shall now further advance this continuing discussion and broach another startling aspect of the philosophy of the multiple creations of man. An assertion had earlier been made under statement no. 54.2 concerning another of our former creations to have been carried out of the earth too. We will now consider that statement afresh and try to figure out the other features associated with it:

93) ...He knows you the best when he created you from the earth and when you were embryos in the wombs of your mothers...<sup>158</sup>

The address here concerns the humanity as whole. Two states of being of man could, thus, literally be discerned from it: first, when he was created from the earth, and second, when he was in the embryonic mode inside the mother's womb. In view of the apparent difficulty embedded in it, however, the first of these states has attracted many figurative interpretations with regard to its actual import. It has been regarded by the classical exegetes that since Prophet Adam was created from the earth, and since all the other human beings are his progeny, their own creation has been presumed to be that of their progenitor. That is, the assertion here concerns the creation of their entire class and genre, rather than that of any individual. But, as this interpretation lacked any intellectual or logical depth, these very exegetes have resorted to another explanation concerning the same: as man has been created out of sperm, and as the sperm itself has been created out of such foodstuff that grows from the earth, so the creation of man out of the sperm has indirectly been referred to as his own creation from the earth. But, it has to be born in mind here that wherever the special creation of Adam has been mentioned in the Qur'an, it has been stated to be with either clay (*turab*) or soil (*teen*) or ringing clay (*salsal*) rather than out of the earth, for which chapters 7:12, 17:61, 38:71-72, 3:59, and 15:26-28 could be referred. It is an altogether different matter now that the earth itself is composed of clay and soil. Consider the following verse that speaks of the creation of a singular person from soil, which very meaningfully implies the creation of just an individual instead of that of his entire class:

93.1) In the course of an argument with him, his companion said to him, "Do you disbelieve in him who has created you out of soil, thereafter out of sperm too, and thereafter fashioned you into a man?"<sup>159</sup>

Besides, if the latter interpretation were to be factual, then two different kinds of creations of man at two different occasions couldn't have been mentioned in both the verses of the present statement as well as the following one, but only one of these two could have been contented with:

93.2) The Almighty has created you out of soil, thereafter out of sperm too...<sup>160</sup>

As stated earlier too, it has to be remembered that the Arabic particle *thumma* used here to denote 'thereafter' indicates sequence of two events as well as the existence of time interval between each of them. It, therefore, clearly suggests that man has also been created out of the sperm only a period after having been created out of the soil. The renowned researcher and lexicographer Raghīb Asfahani, the compiler of the vocabulary of the Qur'an during the 11<sup>th</sup> century AD, too subscribes to the same view. The following statement advances this contention even further:

94) Indeed, we have created man out of an extract of clay. Thereafter we made him a sperm in a safe depository. Thereafter we made the sperm a clot of blood; then we made the clot of blood a lump of flesh; then we made the lump of flesh bones; then we covered the bones with flesh; then we produced him as a different creature. So blessed be the Almighty, the best of the creators.<sup>161</sup>

This statement is, through a spectacular change of expression, explaining the brevity present in all the three verses contained in the previous statement and revealing the true relationship between the twin types of human creations through clay as well as sperm on two different occasions. It is, thus, very much obvious from the first verse, 'Indeed, we have created man out of the extract of clay,' that man had been accorded a definite shape and independent personality consequent to his creation from the extract of clay. This is because the very next verse, 'Thereafter we made him a sperm in a safe depository,' instructs us that it was only after keeping him in that precise state for a while that the same clay-man was transformed into the sperm. Notice the difference of expression here that if the creation of man was stated to have been also through sperm besides soil or clay in all the three verses of the previous statement, an assertion is being made in the current one that the previously created clay-man itself was converted to sperm subsequently.



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Thus, man hasn't been created through the sperm, but the previously created clay-man himself was converted to sperm. This is the reason why it is subsequently being conveyed through 'then we produced him as a different creature' that when man was also created through sperm later, he became an altogether different creature very distinct from his previous creation through clay! It is also evident from it that the creation out of the extract of clay doesn't refer to Adam here, as he was neither transformed into sperm later on nor his progeny itself could be termed to be a different creature from himself. Now, as to what could really be meant by the creation of man from clay or earth can very clearly be ascertained from the following verse:

95) The Almighty has caused you to grow from some of the earths like vegetation.<sup>162</sup>

This verse is the continuation of the verses contained in statement no. 3. The mandatory existence of the earths in all the seven skies as argued there through the mention of the mere existence of the accompanying moons in them is literally being revealed here in a marvelous way. Thus, 'earth' too is appearing here as a generic noun similar to the 'moon' in the preceding verse. As such, the current verse is making an unequivocal statement that man has been created out of the earth like vegetation and plants! And it is not only from the present earth alone, but from many other earths prior to it too!! Remember, the particle *min* in the original Arabic text is also used to denote 'some,' and has been used in this very sense in relation to the earths to indicate some of them. This too very well suggests that the creation of Adam is not meant here as many earths apart, he wasn't made to grow like vegetation from even our single earth alone. We shall shortly place the current verse with those in its immediate context to reveal their immense correlation, which would emphasize our point even more conclusively.

It has to be born in mind at this stage that it has convincingly been established through empirical studies that the botanical world too is a living one, similar to the zoological one. The Qur'an too considers the plants to be living and their grains and stones to be dead:

96) Indeed, the Almighty splits the grains and the stones, and brings forth the living from the dead, and the dead from the living. Such is the Almighty. Where are you getting deviated then?<sup>163</sup>

The first part of this verse is affirming one of the attributes of the Almighty that he is the one who splits the grains and the stones. It logically flows from this splitting that the grains and the stones would blossom as a result and eventually become grown-up trees to yield grains and fruits themselves. This verse appears to be overlooking these details, but, if pondered a little, the very next statement of 'and brings forth the living from the dead, and the dead from the living' is propounding these very realities in an enchanting idiom and revealing the most vital aspect of the botanical world in a marvelous fashion. Thus, the blossoming of the grains and stones consequent to their splitting is being described as 'he brings forth the living from the dead' to imply that the buds are living and the grains and stones emanating from them are dead. Similarly, the dead produce obtained again through the living plants in the form of fresh grains and fruits is being expressed as 'he brings forth the dead from the living.' The following verse too reinforces this argument even further:

96.1) ... (O Lord!) You bring forth the living from the dead, and the dead from the living, and give sustenance to whomsoever you wish without measure.<sup>164</sup>

The passage 'he brings forth the living from the dead, and the dead from the living' in the previous verse is further being interpreted in the current verse through 'and give sustenance to whomsoever you wish without measure' by first replicating the identical statement of 'You bring forth the living from the dead, and the dead from the living' once again to generate the meaning that this sustenance is concerned with these dead things alone that come forth from the living ones. Thus, if both of these verses are merged together by deleting one of the recurring passages, then the consolidated statement reads like the following:

"Indeed, the Almighty splits the grains and the stones. Consequently, he brings forth the living *buds* from the dead *grains and stones*, and the dead *grains and stone-bearing fruits* from the living *buds*, and gives sustenance *through them* to whomsoever he wishes without measure."

Consider now the subsequent three statements that further strengthen the fact of human growth from numerous earths of the universe and convey the objective behind that too:



97) Whenever a Fresh Reminder has come to them from the compassionate Lord, they have always turned aside from it. So, they have belied *this time too*. The tales of what they have been mocking at would come to them in a while. Didn't they observe the earths as to how many a times have we caused every honorable pair to grow from them? There is, indeed, a great sign in it, yet most of them could not come to believe. And, certainly, it is your Lord who is the all-mighty and the all-merciful.<sup>165</sup>

It is clear that this address is with reference to the disbelievers alone. 'Fresh Reminder' here cannot be said to be, as deduced by the predecessors, the different fragmented parts of the Qur'an revealed consecutively over a period of twenty three years. It has also to be born in mind that this phrase had very contentiously been debated during the scholastic period of Islam in the middle ages and had been the principal argument of its Mo'tazila sect in aid of their belief that the Qur'an is the product of the divine creation, as could be gathered by the description of 'Fresh' here. Another argument strengthening our line of reasoning is the verse 'These are those signs of the Manifest Book' preceding the current passage. The remaining four verses of this statement too provide additional arguments in support of this contention. The first verse of this statement, thus, states that whenever a Fresh Reminder has been sent to the disbelievers to secure their faith, they have always spurned it. It is very much obvious from our previous discussion in this chapter that howsoever opportunities of reformation and faith the disbelievers are provided with, they would not come to believe even once. It, thus, clearly suggests that their very same constant perversion since time immemorial is being debated here as well. This is the reason why their present aberration too is again being described through 'So they have belied *this time too*' to emphasize further that the tales and the reality of what they have been mocking would be revealed upon them in the near future. Now, as to what could be meant by this 'Fresh Reminder' and the above-quoted earlier verse 'These are those sings of the Manifest Book' would be dealt with in detail in the subsequent chapter. The following verse too speaks of this very aspect of the disbelievers in another idiom:

97.1) ...Those who are disputing the Book are, indeed, in far-away (i.e., ancient) animosity.<sup>166</sup>

This is why the disbelievers are, in support of this claim, immediately being called upon to ponder over as to how many a times every honorable pair had been caused to grow from many of the earths of the universe. As far as the true import of the term 'honorable pair' is concerned, it could be discerned through the following three different Qur'anic statements:

97.2) The Almighty has created you out of soil, thereafter out of sperm too, and thereafter he made you pairs...<sup>167</sup>

97.3) We have made you pairs.<sup>168</sup>

97.4) We have, indeed, made the children of Adam honorable, carried them on land and sea, provided them with good nourishment, and exalted them over many of our creatures.<sup>169</sup>

It is clearly evident from these verses that man has initially been created from the earth to be recreated again in pairs out of sperm too, and he was also made honorable and exalted over many of the other creature of the universe. 'Honorable pair,' thus, denotes the human pairs of males and females themselves. Accordingly, the multiple lives of man are being argued upon through his multiple growths from the different earths of the universe in the present statement. Note here the striking similarity, both literal and meaningful, between the current statement of 'Didn't they observe the earths as to how many a times have we caused every honorable pair to grow from them?' and 'The Almighty has caused you to grow from some of the earths like vegetation' contained in statement no. 95. We are considering the earth in its generic form here as it has already been established earlier that every individual is accorded a new life only on a new earth. Another argument in support of our present contention is the subsequent statement of 'yet most of them could not come to believe' in the past tense, which could be in reference only to the honorable pairs that were made to grow repeatedly from different earths just to be wiped away at a later date each time. Besides, the identical statement of 'There is, indeed, a great sign in it, yet most of them could not come to believe' has been repeated on seven more occasions too in the Qur'an, i.e., in the verse nos. 67, 103, 121, 139, 158, 174, and 190 of this very chapter. And it has appeared as an admonition right after the death and destruction of the peoples of the Prophets Moses, Abraham, Noah, Hud, Saleh, Lot, and Shu'aib respectively that many of them too could not come to believe in God



then. When this statement has always appeared elsewhere consequent to the death and destruction of one or the other past nations of the world, it clearly suggests that here too it has followed the annihilation of some ancient people, which cannot be any one other than these very honorable pair.

Furthermore, the divine attributes of 'the all-mighty' and 'the all-merciful' at the end of this statement should also be kept in mind, which are repeatedly being mentioned on the occasion of the narration of the multiple creations of man to convey the message that the disbelievers are continually being given respite and provided with numerous opportunities of reformation and faith only on account of them. It, thus, reveals that the multiple lives of man are being argued upon here through his growths from multiple earths of the universe that whenever he is given existence on any earth, he is made to grow from it like a plant first, and that his trial and testing commences from this very stage itself. Now, the following statement further strengthens the current one:

98) Whenever a Fresh Reminder has come to them from their Lord, they have always listened to it playfully. Their hearts are lost in pleasure, and the wrongdoers whisper one another, "He is merely a person just like your own selves. Why are you, then, taken in by this magic knowingly?" *Each time their messenger said, "My Lord knows all your conversations in the skies and the earths, and he is the all-hearing, the all-knowing."* Rather, they said, "These are confused dreams, or he has forged it, or he is a poet. So, let him bring to us a sign similar to what the earlier ones were sent with." No habitation which we had destroyed before them came to believe *thereafter*. How can they believe then?<sup>170</sup>

Here too the address is, on the lines of the previous statement, confined to the disbelievers alone. Thus, the literal as well meaningful similarities between the very first verses of both these statements are very much striking. Both of them stress that whenever in the past a Fresh Reminder has been sent out to the disbelievers to secure their belief, they have always spurned it. If this fact was further emphasized upon in the previous statement through the statement of man having been caused to grow like plants from different earths of the universe again and again and destroyed each time, here too the same death and destruction on a universal scale is being discussed in greater detail. So, the second verse is further describing this very spurning of the disbelievers

to state that they had always ridiculed their messengers and accused the Fresh Reminders they had brought with them to be nothing more than a magic. They were not only engaged in this antagonism themselves but also secretly incited the general masses against the messengers. This is the reason why the third verse states that each time their messengers responded to them that the Almighty Lord very well knew all those conversations they had made in the skies and the earths earlier. Notice in this verse first that the verb 'said' has been reported in its past tense, then its subject too has been totally omitted, which reveals that the present expression has deliberately been employed to generate the meaning that its utterer isn't the present messenger, but all those who were periodically sent to them with the Fresh Reminders earlier. Besides, in this very verse the people who were involved in this conversation too have been very meaningfully left out. But, this omission has very marvelously been disclosed in the immediately next verse through 'Rather, they said' that their utterer too were the same disbelievers. Thus, the latter two verses of the current statement are interpreting the former two of them.

Hence, this is the reason why all these four verses have been condensed into 'No habitation which we had destroyed before them came to believe *thereafter*. How can they believe then?' in the fifth verse to predict that those of the disbelievers who couldn't come to believe and subsequently destroyed in their earlier lives wouldn't repose their faith in the Almighty in their current lives too. And this reality holds good not only for the disbelievers of the present human race but for all those given existence in the other earths of the universe too. Remember, this last verse has already been dealt with in detail under statement no. 56, and the current statement strengthens it even further. Moreover, the statement of this death and destruction on a universal scale is further being described subsequently through verses 11-17 of the present chapter, which have already been discussed under statement no. 12. This amply establishes that the current statement is interpreting the previous one and emphasizing the fact of the human growth from the earths as well, since the establishing of a reality through two different sets of arguments implies correlation between those arguments too.

99) He it is who created you out of soil, thereafter determined a term, and another fixed term is with him. Yet you doubt *in resurrection*. It is the Almighty in the skies and the earth too; he knows both your covert and



overt affairs and knows whatever you earn. Whenever a Sign from among the Signs of their Lord has come to them, they have always turned aside from it. So, *this time too*, when it has come to them, they have belied the Truth (i.e., the Qur'an). The tales of what they have been mocking at would come to them in a while.<sup>171</sup>

Here too the address is general in nature with respect to the humanity as a whole. So, the phrase 'created you out of soil' in the first verse refers to our growth from the earth as plants. Subsequently, if 'thereafter he determined a term' relates to our present life, 'another fixed term is with him' is indicative of our subsequent lives. This is why it is being wondered through 'Yet you doubt *in resurrection*' that when we have already been recreated anew more than once in the past itself how can we now dispute the resurrection now. Then, if the phrase 'he knows your covert affairs' in the second verse refers to our previous lives that have been kept concealed from us, 'overt affairs' concerns our present life. Besides, the statement 'It is the Almighty in the skies and the earth too' also bears great significance, as it alludes to the fact that we have been given existence on this earth by gathering us from the other earths of the universe by the same Divine Being. The verbal sequence of the 'skies' and the 'earth' fully coinciding with 'your covert affairs' and 'your overt affairs' respectively should also be born in mind here, which suggests that the covert affairs are related to our past lives in the skies, and the overt ones are concerned with the present life on this earth. This interpretation, thus, is fully consistent with the statement '*Each time their messenger said, "My Lord knows all your conversations in the skies and the earths"*' contained in the previous statement. It is only to further strengthen this message that it is subsequently being stated again that whenever a divine Sign has come to the disbelievers, they have turned aside from it, and that their present disregard of the Qur'an is nothing new but just another episode in their long and continuous chain of denials. Thus, those who dispute resurrection are once again being countered with the fact of their own multiple creations, which also include growth from the earths as plants too.

It could now be observed as to how significantly uniform the current statement of 'Whenever a Sign from among the Signs of their Lord has come to them, they have always turned aside from it' is with 'Whenever a Fresh Reminder has come to them from the compassionate Lord, they have always

turned aside from it' and 'Whenever a Fresh Reminder has come to them from their Lord, they have always listened to it playfully' in the previous two statements respectively. Similarly, the consistency of expression between 'So, *this time too*, when it has come to them, they have belied the truth (i.e., the Qur'an). The tales of what they have been mocking at would come to them in a while' in the current statement and 'So, they have belied *this time too*. The tales of what they have been mocking at would come to them in a while' in statement no. 97 is also extremely noteworthy. Thus, the uniformity of expression once again conveys consistency in their denotation. The difference, however, being that if 'Reminder' has been used in the previous two statements, 'Sign' has occurred in the current one. But, as could be revealed from our upcoming discussion, both these are only synonymous with each other. All these three statements are, hence, uniformly asserting the fact of the human growth from the different earths of the universe and also mutually interpreting the apparent ambiguities present in each of them.

Now, after being caused to grow from the earth like vegetation and plants, how does man appear in his present manifestation could be gathered from the following statement:

100) So, glorify the Almighty in your evenings and mornings — his is the praise in the skies and the earths too — and in your late and early afternoons. He brings forth the living from the dead, the dead from the living, and revives the earths after their deaths. And you too are being brought forth similarly. And among his signs is that he created you out of soil, thereafter (i.e., after a while) you have, all of a sudden, become man spreading *all over*.<sup>172</sup>

The term 'the skies and the earths' once again conveys that all the earths of the universe in their generic form are the subject matter of discussion here too. So, the passage 'his is the praise in the skies and the earths' as a parenthetical expression precisely in between an organized commandment of praying the Almighty five times a day is very delicately suggesting that we too are being commanded of the prayers in the same manner as it is prevalent all through the universe. Consider now the subsequent verse of 'He brings forth the living from the dead, the dead from the living' which is once again very meaningfully silent on the identity of this dead and the living. The phrase 'and



revives the earths after their deaths,' however, implies that they are non other than the earths themselves. Thus, it is being asserted here that the Almighty gives multiple lives and multiple deaths to all the earths of the universe on a continuous basis. Remember, the same message has already been conveyed through the statement 'Haven't we made the earths to contract their wings while flying apace, alive and dead many a times?' under statement no. 31 as well. So, the present expression 'He brings forth the living from the dead, the dead from the living, and revives the earths after their deaths' is literally interpreting that statement as well.

Then, the very next statement 'And you too are being brought forth similarly' reveals that in the same way as the earths are being revived after their respective deaths, man is also being caused to grow from the earths regularly. It has to be born in mind that the predecessor exegetes had taken this act of bringing forth from the earths to be the casting out of the dead from their graves on the Day of Resurrection. There is, however, no evidence in support of this contention. Whereas, two major arguments could be found augmenting our line of reasoning. First, when both the former verbs 'brings forth' and 'revives' are originally appearing in Arabic in the imperfect tense to denote the present, the latter verb 'being brought forth' in the same verse too should denote the same tense according to the syntax. When multiple identical verbs appear continuously in the same verse, we just cannot consider some of them to be in the present and the others to be in the future tenses according to our own wisdom. The predecessors were left with no other alternative except for considering it to be in the future tense. Moreover, they had considered this Qur'anic statement in the context of merely our present earth, whereas, it is, in reality, appearing in relation to all the earths of the universe.

Consider now the very next statement of 'among his signs is that he created you out of soil' which is literally interpreting 'you too are being brought forth similarly' that it is, in effect, the growth from the earths like vegetation. Then, it is also being asserted through 'thereafter you have, all of a sudden, become a man spreading *all over*' that it is only after a period of time after our initial growth from the earth in the form of plants that we were made to evolve into our present human manifestation all of a sudden to spread all over it. It has to be remembered that the original Arabic particle *i'za*,

which we have translated here as 'all of a sudden,' denotes the occurrence of an event suddenly and unexpectedly.

Thus, the current passage, 'And among his signs is that he created you out of soil, thereafter you have, all of a sudden, become man spreading *all over*' is making an unequivocal statement that we weren't in any way in our present form when we were created out of the soil earlier, and it is only a while after our previous creation that we have evolved suddenly and unexpectedly into this manifestation. Hence, the current statement together with the earlier ones 'created you out of soil, thereafter out of sperm, and thereafter fashioned you into a man' and 'Indeed, we have created man out of the extract of clay. Thereafter we made him a sperm in a safe depository... then we produced him as a different creature' under statement nos. 93.1 and 94 are mutually interpreting each other. It could be pondered here too as to how this sort of creation from the soil can be taken to mean to be that of Prophet Adam.

Furthermore, the imputation of the characteristic of 'spreading' to 'man' here carries another significant insight in it. In order to imply the current message the mere statement of 'thereafter all of a sudden you have become man' could have sufficed, and there wouldn't absolutely have been any necessity of this adjective. It can, thus, very rightly be inferred from it that it is being intended through this additional adjective to convey the fact that when man evolved into his present form from his earlier vegetative one it didn't so happen that many men and women surfaced suddenly through this process, but only one man or a pair of them came into being initially, through whom the others are spreading continually in their progeny by the established course of human procreation today.

It has also to be remembered here that the present entire statement concerns the aftermath of the revival of the earths from their dead phases. So, the current statement could also be understood in the light of statement no. 18 as well, where it has very cogently been established that it is only after reviving all the dead earths of the universe with rainwater that every kind of animals have been given existence in them. Thus, the current statement is interpreting the statement 'in the water which the Almighty rained from the skies and revived the earths therewith after their death and scattered all kinds of animals in both of them...there are signs for the wise people' contained therein. Consider now the following statement which further reinforces our



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contention and expresses this fact resorting to a relatively clearer expression:

101) And who has sent down water from the sky in due measure and revived the dead habitation therewith. You too are being brought forth similarly.<sup>173</sup>

The current statement is the continuation of statement no. 65 and is deeply related to it as well. Hence, in furtherance of the statements made therein of all the earths of the universe having been made beds for us and the creation of different human paths in them for our guidance, it is also being asserted in the current statement that man is being caused to grow from the earth in the same way as the earth itself was revived earlier through rainwater after its previous death. Remember, in the same way as *qar'yah* (habitation) had metaphorically been used to denote the earth earlier, *bal'dah* too has been used in the current statement to imply the same meaning.

These Qur'anic statements are making it very obvious that whenever an earth is revived after its death man is initially caused to grow from it like vegetation before being made to appear in his current form suddenly and unexpectedly. The following statement makes another startling disclosure concerning man and further advances this philosophy to introduce another link between both of our plant and human manifestations in the following words:

102) Has there not come upon man a while in the total life span of the world when he wasn't even anything worth mentioning. Indeed, we have created man from an excessively mingled sperm, testing him; thereafter (i.e., only after a while) we have given him hearing and insight. We have guided him the whole course in such a way that he will either be grateful or ungrateful.<sup>174</sup>

Extreme coherence is to be found between all the three verses of the current statement. No real meaning could be discerned from them if any one of these verses is detached and considered in isolation from the remaining two of them. It can, hence, be pondered that 'man' has repeatedly been mentioned twice in the first two verses here. So, when he, according to the second verse, happens to be the descendant of Adam consequent to his creation from sperm, then, both according to the uniformity of expression employed here and the requirement of a well-structured speech, the same descendent should be meant in the first verse as well. Another compelling argument in support of

this contention is that there hasn't come upon Adam a time in his entire life span when he wasn't anything worth mentioning. Remember, it is very much obvious from the phrase 'upon man' here that man has undergone this worthless condition only in his state of manhood. Moreover, some of the predecessors too have argued that only the progeny of Adam is meant at both these places.

Besides, the marvelous addition of the phrase 'in the total life span of the world' to 'while' is extremely significant too. It, thus, conveys that the occasion of this insignificant condition of man is a remarkably ancient one. Remember, the original Arabic word *dahr* originally denotes the total life span of the world right from its inception to its eventual culmination, which perfectly coincides with any of the numerous periodic live phases of any given earth, as each one of them is a world in itself similar to our own ongoing one. The very first verse here, thus, reveals that there has come upon man in the state of his very manhood a time in an exceptionally ancient current live phase of the Earth when he wasn't even anything worth mentioning. That is, he was very much existent in some or the other human forms, but wasn't worth mentioning then! In the other words, he enjoyed such a miniature and insignificant or microscopic personality at that precise point in time that he failed to make others notice that after all he too was someone worth mentioning. Yet, he was man blessed with life.

We shall now explore the subsequent verse in order to determine this extremely ancient and exceptionally insignificant state of the early man. The original Arabic word *am'shaj* appearing as the adjective of the singular noun *nut'fa* (sperm) here is the plural of *ma'shij* (mingled). *Nut'fatun am'shaj*, thus, denotes 'excessively mingled sperm.' It has to be noted that *nut'fa* is used only to represent the male reproductive fluid, containing spermatozoa in suspension, contrary to the female one. It has also appeared in its singular form and devoid of any adjective on another 11 different occasions in the Qur'an. The current verse is the lone place wherein it is, through a spectacular change of expression, accompanied by an adjective as well. We have already witnessed such marvelous expressions and the extraordinary meanings they have generated on many occasions earlier too. A pertinent question arises now as to the logic behind the supplementation of this adjective, when 'sperm' alone appears to convey the desired meaning, and as



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to why does it appear in the plural when its qualified noun is a singular one? Even if it is assumed for the sake of argument that both the male and female reproductive fluids are meant here with *nut'fa*, then too its adjective should have been *ma'shijatain* in its dual form. Note that in contrast to English, there also exists a dual number between the singular and the plural in Arabic. As far as the interpretations of the predecessors in this regard are concerned, they are all merely based upon figurative explanations in total disregard of the true import of the immediately preceding and deeply interconnected verse. Now, if the essence of the previous verse as detailed above is kept in view, realizing that of the present one too becomes that much easy. As a result, both of them would be interpreting and complimenting each other.

Thus, when the origin of man hasn't directly been human, that he has initially been caused to grow from the Earth like vegetation as well, and that a time has come upon him in the current live phase of the Earth when he wasn't anything worth mentioning by possessing an incredibly miniature or microscopic body, it could rightly be inferred from all these facts that he has only gradually evolved into his present form over this vast period of time. To be precise, he has continuously assumed many a different life forms prior to the current one. Consequently, his sperm too has constantly evolved to become 'excessively mingled one' today, the blend or essence of the sperms of all his previous manifestations! This is the reason why 'testing him' has been brought in as a circumstantial clause to convey the message that the objective behind the gradual creation of man in different botanical and zoological manifestations even before being endowed with hearing and insight to evolve into his present form too was nothing but his testing alone. Remember, through the passage 'Didn't they observe the earths as to how many a times have we caused every honorable pair to grow from them? There is, indeed, a great sign in it, yet most of them could not come to believe' under statement 97 too the same message has been conveyed that the intention behind his multiple growth from multiple earths of the universe and eventual extinctions too were concerned with his testing alone. The following is another significant statement concerning the creation of man in varied shapes and forms:

102.1) He has shaped you in whatsoever form he pleased.<sup>175</sup>

This is the reason why this current statement is instantly followed by the phrase 'thereafter we have given him hearing and insight' to affirm that it is only after this constant testing by bestowing him with a range of animal forms successively that he was evolved into in his present form and given the most distinctive faculties of hearing and insight that distinguish him from the rest. Remember, the adverb 'thereafter' (*fa* in Arabic) in this passage too once again denotes the sequence of two events as well as the existence of time interval between them. The current passage, thus, is effectively interpreting the earlier ones of 'thereafter he fashioned you into a man,' 'then we produced him as a different creature,' and 'thereafter you have, all of a sudden, become a man spreading *all over*' in statement nos. 93.1, 94, and 100 respectively. In this manner, the first two verses of the current statement are mutually interpreting the ambiguities present in either of them. And it is in order to further reinforce the phrase 'testing him' in the second verse that the passage 'We have guided him the whole course in such a way that he will either be grateful or ungrateful' has instantly been introduced in the third verse to convey the message that during this entire journey consisting of their various plant and animal lives, both the believers and the disbelievers of the earliest manifestation remain committed to their respective positions in the remaining of them as well. That is, the disbelievers persist in their stubbornness not only in their human lives, but in all of their plant and animal manifestations as well.

When these statements are affirming accountability in the animal world too, there are still many more that state that they shall all be gathered on the Day of Judgment, an obvious indication that it must only be for reward and punishment for their respective good and bad deeds:

103) There is no animal on the earth and no bird that flies with its wings but a community like your own. There is nothing that we have neglected in the Book. Thereafter they shall all be gathered before their Lord.<sup>176</sup>

103.1) When the wild beasts shall be gathered.<sup>177</sup>

When all the animals too are communities similar to the humans, the Qur'an further affirms that virtually everything in the universe, including themselves, is in the praise of the Almighty, and that messengers have also been sent in every community:

103.2) There is nothing that doesn't chant his praise, but you don't com-



prehend their praise...<sup>178</sup>

103.3) ...there isn't any community in which a messenger hasn't passed.<sup>179</sup>

This is the reason why it is being declared in the following verse that all these riddles and mysteries would only be revealed on the Day of Judgment:

103.4) The day when all the mysteries would be revealed.<sup>180</sup>

It could, thus, be observed as to how meaningful and stunning expression the Qur'an indirectly employs in uncovering the great reality of the previous animal manifestations of man through the mere mention of his own constantly changing and excessively mingled sperm. Besides, it also implies the final appearance through this process of the modern man by the simple mention of the bestowal of his hearing and insight. And in order to augment this contention even further, consider the following statement too:

104) He created all the things excellently, and began the creation of man out of clay. Thereafter, he brought about his progeny through the essence of mean water. Thereafter he fashioned him, breathed his spirit in him, and gave you ears, eyes, and hearts (i.e., insight). Yet you show very little gratitude. Still, they say, "When we vanish into the earth, shall we be recreated afresh?" In reality, they deny the meeting with their Lord.<sup>181</sup>

It is obvious from this statement that man's own previous growth from the earth is being presented here to counter the criticism of the disbelievers as to how he would be recreated again on the Day of Resurrection even after disappearing into the earth consequent to his death. The phrase 'he began the creation of man out of clay,' thus, conveys in very clear terms that the growth of man from the earth is merely the preliminary link in his somewhat lengthy chain of creations. The subsequent statement of 'Thereafter, he brought about his progeny through the essence of mean water' affirms that when he was evolved into the animal form after remaining in the vegetative one for a while, his progeny took effect from this very moment itself. It is evident from 'his progeny' that this transformation happened through merely one plant, after which his progeny progressed through the sperm. The progeny was just one, the same continued to progress and evolve, and when he was eventually fashioned into the current human form the divine spirit was breathed into him. And according to statement no. 100, this man ultimately became the progeni-

tor of the present human race on the earth.

It also flows from the specification of the progeny here that man did not evolve into all sorts of animal forms during his earlier progression and evolution. His evolution was, as a matter of fact, restricted merely to the animals in whose progeny and line of descent he has progressed.

Consider now the phrase 'the essence of mean water' once more. It has to be noted that merely 'mean water' denotes sperm or semen. For instance, the Qur'an itself states on another occasion:

104.1) Haven't we created you through mean water?<sup>182</sup>

Remember, the phrase 'mean water' has appeared only on these two occasions in the entire Qur'an. Thus, the moot point here is as to what could be the true import of this 'essence of mean water' and as to why was it modified with the 'essence of' merely in the former verse, contrary to the latter? So, it can now be pondered if this expression is in any way different from 'an excessively mingled sperm,' contained in the previous statement. In the same manner as it was affirmed there that the present human sperm is the blend and essence of the sperms of all his previous manifestations, here too the same message is conveyed through the 'essence of mean water.' That is to say, it is stated here that when man was evolved into the animal form from the earlier vegetative one, and he began to be created by the sperms too, each of his subsequent manifestations used to be through the mixture and essence of the sperms of all his previous manifestations. Both of these expressions are, hence, mutually interpreting and immensely strengthening each other.

So, the difference between our previous plant and animal forms and the present human one is once again being highlighted here with 'Thereafter he fashioned him, breathed his spirit in him, and gave you ears, eyes, and hearts (i.e., insight)' and we are immediately called upon through 'Yet you show very little gratitude' to express our gratefulness to the Almighty for having bestowed us with such distinguishing faculties that were absent previously. It has to be particularly noted here that the Qur'an deems the hearts themselves to be the seat of the faculty of insight and intelligence, as it affirms at another place thus:

104.2) Haven't they travelled through the earth so that they could have the hearts to understand with, and ears to listen with? It is not the eyes



that are blind, but the hearts within their breasts.<sup>183</sup>

So, 'heart,' in the context of humans, signifies the faculty of insight and intelligence always. Besides, it has also to be noted that the entire conversation that was so far taking place continuously in third person in the current statement has amazingly been changed to the first person to address us directly and state that we have been endowed with ears, eyes, and hearts. Hence, this fact too very compellingly implies that the description of the creation of the modern man in this entire statement starts from this precise point, and that the earlier one merely refers to his previous manifestations. This is the reason why the criticism of the disbelievers is immediately being commented sarcastically through "Still, they say, 'When we vanish into the earth, shall we be recreated afresh,'" as to how couldn't they be resurrected from the earth again when they have already been made to grow from it earlier too.

Consider now the following statement that very clearly regards man to be an animal, which further strengthens all our previous talk in this regard:

105) Indeed, the worst of the animals in the sight of the Almighty are those *men* who do not repose faith, and, thus, do not believe.<sup>184</sup>

The following statement is reinforcing this fact even further and threatening to take away our hearing and sight and set a seal upon our insight too:

106) Indeed, we have sent messengers to many a nations before you and afflicted them with hardships and afflictions so that they may humble themselves. Why, then, they didn't humble themselves when our affliction came upon them? But their hearts got hardened, and Satan made the things they were doing appear fair to them. So, when they forgot what they were reminded of, we opened the gates of everything to them until, when they boasted of what they were given, we caught them suddenly, and they were plunged into despair. The wicked people were, thus, rooted out. All praise be to the Almighty, the Lord of all the worlds. Say, "Just ponder if the Almighty were to take away your hearing and sight *too* and set a seal upon your hearts, which deity other than the Almighty will bring them back to you?" See how variously we propound the signs *of our providence*, yet they turn aside. Say, "Ponder a little, if the punishment of the Almighty were to come upon you suddenly or openly shall any one other than the wicked people be destroyed?"<sup>185</sup>

The initial two verses of the current statement are depicting the wrongdoings of the ancient nations, while the subsequent two of them are conveying their eventual extinction through the divine punishments. Thereafter, the fifth one cautions us that our own hearing and sight too might be taken away and our hearts or insight might be sealed. Now, as to what could be the actual import of this last verse is immediately expressed through "Say, 'Ponder a little if the punishment of the Almighty were to come upon you suddenly or openly shall any one other than the wicked people be destroyed?'" that it is, in reality, the same punishment of extinction meted out earlier to the ancient nations as well. It is very much obvious, thus, that the taking away of our hearing, sight, and intelligence, which we had eventually been bestowed with to elevate us to our present form from the earlier plant and animal ones, is an extremely meaningful implication that we would once again be made to return to the plant life, where we had originated from sans these distinguishing qualities. That is to say that we would again be caused to grow from yet another earth like vegetation consequent to our extinction from here, which would be the precursor to our subsequent creation in human form from there.

Note further that the taking away of our hearing and sight and the setting of the seal upon our intelligence and insight is being regarded through the passage 'See how variously we propound the signs' as a sign of the divine providence. As a matter of fact, the whole of the present statement is appearing in response to the demand of the disbelievers from the holy Prophet that a sign of divine providence should be revealed on him too as a mark of his prophethood, made earlier in verse 37 of this very chapter 6 through "They say, 'Why isn't a sign sent down to him from his Lord.'" Thus, after giving a startling reply to them in the same verse through "Say, 'Indeed, the Almighty is powerful enough to send down a sign, yet most of them do not realize it,'" that particular sign is being revealed in the current statement to quiz them if they require any other greater sign from their Lord than his present disclosure of their own astounding reality of having caused to be grown from the earth like vegetation earlier and that they would again be made to return to that primitive form of life once more in the future as well?

Parenthetically, the passage 'So, when they forgot what they were reminded of, we opened to them the gates of everything until, when they boasted of what they were given, we caught them suddenly, and they were



plunged into despair' here bears another significant insight for us. It is very much obvious from it that it has been an established divine tradition that whenever a nation takes to waywardness, they are bestowed with still more worldly comforts, and when they pride themselves on their material accomplishments and plunge even deeper into their perversity and arrogance the divine punishment engulfs them to exterminate them all of a sudden. Remember, this is the very message that has already been conveyed through the passage 'The similitude of worldly life is like that water which we sent down from the skies, and therewith grew the vegetation of the earths of which men and cattle eat, until, when the earths took on their glitter and adorned themselves and its inhabitants thought that they had power over them, our command came upon them by night or day, and we mowed them down as though they weren't inhabited at all previously' under statement no. 35 as well. Hence, both of these statements hold many significant insights for the wise people in the contemporary period and provide the necessary means of consolation to them, and perhaps the time must be ripe enough for the execution of this imminent threat too.

The current statement was merely articulating the prospect of our reverse creation, whereas the following one is according it the shape of a definite reality in very clear terms thus:

107) O you who have been given the Book, believe in what we have revealed confirming that which had been with you, before we erase faces, that is, turn them backwards, or curse them as we have cursed the people of the Sabbath. The decree of the Almighty comes to pass always.<sup>186</sup>

The Arabic conjunction *fa* appearing in between the phrases 'before we erase faces' and 'turn them backwards' is also used to join two successively appearing phrases wherein the latter describes the brevity contained in the former. For instance:

107.1) Noah called unto his Lord, that is, he said, "O My Lord, my son is the member of my family..."<sup>187</sup>

This verse pertains to the occasion when the son of Prophet Noah was about to be submerged in the Deluge. So, Noah's brief supplication to his Lord made through the phrase 'Noah called unto his Lord' is further being described immediately by means of the same conjunction *fa* through "he said,

'O My Lord, my son is the member of my family'. Thus, the true import of the erasing of faces in the current statement too is instantly being explained as turning them backwards, that is, causing man to revert back to where he had originated from. Now, when man has been caused to evolve from his previous plant and animal manifestations to his current form by eventually endowing him with different faculties that differentiate him from his earlier manifestations, and these faculties pertain primarily to his face alone, it can rightly be inferred from the erasing of the faces, as cautioned in the previous statement through 'if the Almighty were to take away your hearing and sight and set a seal upon your hearts,' to be that of these faculties themselves. Moreover, the subsequent passage 'or curse them as we have cursed the people of the Sabbath' is extremely significant too. As a matter of fact, this passage is referring to a particular Jewish people who were punished and turned into apes consequent to their breach of the Sabbath, and, thus, exemplifying the reverse creation. It is now very much clear that this latter passage has been advanced merely to further elucidate the former. And aside from the mode of expression employed in the current statement, the concluding passage 'The decree of the Almighty comes to pass always' too conveys that this will going to be an imminent reality in the future. So, it is being articulated here that at the time of our subsequent regeneration through another earth in the form of vegetation, which would be the forerunner to another of our creations in the human form, neither do our faces remain in their present form nor do we ourselves. The following verse further reinforces this fact and reveals that this entire procedure is repeated not only once, but over and over again several times too:

108) Indeed, he begins *the creation of man* and then repeats it, so that he judiciously reward those who believe and perform good deeds...<sup>188</sup>

The original Arabic word *al-qalq* in this verse denotes 'man.' Literal denotation of the word apart, the subsequent passage 'so that he judiciously reward those who believe and perform good deeds' being another argument. And yet another argument in its favor is the following verse, which makes a similar statement by addressing him directly:

108.1) ...similar to how he began you, you shall revert again.<sup>189</sup>

Whereas, the same word has been used under statement no. 19 to represent



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108.1) ...similar to how he began you, you shall revert again.<sup>189</sup>

Whereas, the same word has been used under statement no. 19 to represent



'creation' too, the argument for this usage being the subsequent statement of 'Move around on the Earth and observe as to how he began the creation' there. The similarity of expression between both these statements too should also be kept in view at this point. If the expression 'the Almighty begins the creation and then repeats it' had been used there to convey the repeated acts of the origination of creation or the resetting of the biological clock anew on the earths several times, here too an identical statement of 'he begins *the creation of man* and then repeats it' has been advanced to put forth the origin of man and its multiple recurrence. This shows that the current uniformity of expression is not at all accidental in nature, but has deliberately been advanced in order to convey the commonality of their origins. We have already established that man's origin lies in vegetation, and that he has changed many zoological forms thereafter before being made to appear in his present form as well. Today, modern science too has amassed considerable empirical evidence to show that the origin of man itself is that of the terrestrial life too. Thus, the origin of man begins with the origin of life itself on all the earths. In this manner, both these two statements are stringing together and summarizing all the previous 14 of them concerning the previous plant and animal manifestations of the modern man.

Now, in view of the foregoing Qur'anic assertions and the meanings and implications they have generated particularly in the contemporary period, a pertinent question arises as to whether this gradual creation of man itself is the one that modern science considers it be the theory of biological or human evolution? It could be inferred from our current discussion that there may not be much of a fundamental difference between them. Though modern science appears to get to this great intellectual reality through the empirical studies of the biological world, however, for a more comprehensive picture of this astounding providential phenomenon to emerge, many more intermediate links remain to be explored and strung together, some of which have been highlighted by the learned father of this humble writer, Moulana Mohammed Shihabuddin Nadvi in his book *Evolution or Creation?* And particularly, the intermittent different live phases of the Earth, the regular origin and extinction of life or the constant resetting of the biological clock in each of these phases, and the potential relationship of the present live phase of the Earth with the previous ones still remain to be ascertained. It should also be noted that the

current estimated age of the Earth to be 4.6 billion years is merely relative in nature, as the scientific evidence man could gather concerning its age points only to this precise number. If he is able to stumble upon anything more ancient in the future, its age could be revised accordingly. Furthermore, the compiled history of evolution with science today essentially deals with the occurrence of events for the last merely half a billion years alone, and it offers no convincing explanation of the preceding four billion years.

Our foregoing discussion makes it abundantly clear that whenever man is given a new existence on any of the earths of the universe, he is initially made to grow from it as vegetation. He is then made to evolve into different animal manifestations one after the other, and eventually caused to appear into the human form all of a sudden to multiply and spread all across. That is, this biological evolution isn't unique to the present live phase of merely our earth alone, but is common to all the live phases of all the earths in existence in the entire universe as well. Consider now the following breathtaking and awe-inspiring statement that amazingly summarizes all our previous discussion concerning the creation of the natural phenomena and all the different aspects of the multiple creations of man and succinctly places them in a nutshell:

109) What ails you that you do not look for majesty in the Almighty, whereas he has created you time after time? Don't you observe as to how the Almighty has created seven skies one above the other as layers, and in them made the moons luminous and the suns, lamps? And he has caused you to grow from some of the earths like vegetation. Thereafter he will make you return into them. And thereafter he will cause you to come out of them repeatedly, because the Almighty has made the earths beds for you, so that you keep entering in their broad paths.<sup>190</sup>

It is evident from the address in this statement that it is general in nature with respect to the humanity as a whole. Our previous discussion concerning the current verse nos. 15-16 and 17 carried under statement nos. 3 and 95 respectively should also be kept in mind here. The original Arabic word *at'war* is the plural of *taur* (time), and, thus, denotes 'time after time.' So, the passage 'whereas he has created you time after time' is quite literally and unequivocally conveying that man has been created repeatedly. It can be noted here that after making a direct statement of his multiple creations, man



is being encouraged to be convinced of the divine majesty and further called upon to observe, as a proof of this claim, all the seven skies contained one above the other. We have already witnessed under statement no. 3 that if, on the one hand, both 'sun' and 'moon' have appeared here as generic nouns to convey their abundant existence in all the seven skies, on the other, instead of mentioning in clear terms the compulsory existence in them of the earths too, the same was implied merely through the statement of the existence in them of the accompanying moons alone. Thus, when 'moon' is appearing as a generic noun here, then the accompanying 'earth' too would be similarly placed. Now, if pondered a little, it clearly emerges from it that the present expression has very sagaciously been advanced to employ the earth as a generic noun in the entire statement. Thereafter, as detailed under statement no. 95, these implied earths too have very marvelously been revealed through the immediately following verse 'And he has caused you to grow from some of the earths like vegetation' to show that we have already repeatedly been recreated and caused to grow from many of these earths like plants. Subsequently, the passage 'Thereafter he will make you return into them. And thereafter he will cause you to come out of them repeatedly' reveals that even after our imminent return to the earth, we would again be made to grow from still many more earths of the universe too. Remember, in order to the generate the meaning of our prospective multiple growths from the earths in this passage the verbal noun *iq'ra'ja* has also been repeated in the original Arabic text after the verb *yuq'ri'ju'kum*, which provides extra stress to this verb and conveys its multiplicity of occurrence too. And finally, the passage 'because, the Almighty has made the earths beds for you, so that you keep entering in their broad paths' asserts that all this is being done as all the earths of the universe have been made beds for us in order that we enter and keep moving in the broad paths created in them for our own guidance and climb to our ultimate destination by leading our lives in all of them successively.

Consider now the astonishing similarity of expression between the current statement and the one mentioned under statement no. 92, which casts further light upon the similarity of their denotation as well: if the assertion of the multiple creations of man was argued there through the declaration of all the seven skies and all the earths having been created specifically for his testing alone, he is being called upon in the current statement to observe them

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## 5 Universality of Qur'an

The Qur'an comprises such profound realities concerning its own true nature that couldn't have bared themselves until all the relevant facts as regards the preponderance of the earths in the entire universe and the creation and testing of the progeny of Prophet Adam in each of them through multiple creations themselves haven't come to light. If these realities find explicit mentioning on some occasions, they appear in implied or ambiguous phraseologies elsewhere. If they are expressed summarily somewhere, they are dealt with in greater detail on some other occasions. However, such extreme care and diligence has been taken in the use of the terms and phrases that if on the one hand their actual denotation isn't revealed prematurely, on the other, there shouldn't remain any complication in their comprehension to the earlier generations. We have already witnessed some of this unparalleled prudence and enormous planning of the Qur'an in the foregoing chapters too. So, the Qur'an introduces itself very eloquently and meaningfully in the following words:

110) Indeed, this *Qur'an* has been revealed repeatedly by the Lord of all the worlds. The Trusted Spirit has carried it down upon your heart that you may be one of those who have warned in a clear Arabic language. Truly, it is from among the scriptures of the ancients too.<sup>191</sup>

The last verse of this passage, 'Truly, it is from among the scriptures of the ancients too' is quite literally revealing a fundamental feature of the



Qur'an that it isn't at all a new or strange book, but, similar to the present, it has also found existence in the past too, implying that it is an ancient book. In view of the literal denotation of this verse, the noted luminaries Abu Hanifa (died 767 AD), Jassas Razi (980), Zamakhshari (1143), Nasafi (1301) etc. too held the view that the Qur'an has been revealed in some form or the other previously as well. Abu Hanifa was so impressed by this verse that he was compelled to argue upon the propriety of reciting even the translation of the Qur'an in any other language in the prayers. His contention was that the ancient Qur'an being affirmed here must definitely have been a non-Arabic one given that the entire history of this language is devoid of any other Qur'an besides the present one. When a non-Arabic Qur'an too is said to have existed previously, it can logically be deduced from it that it can be recited in any of the languages. He, however, retracted from this stand later on to the mere extent of its recitation in the prayer. Whereas, the other exegetes, owing to the apparent difficulty found here, took to interpreting it figuratively by considering the word 'mention' to be the understood and translated this verse as 'Truly, it's *mention* is in the scriptures of the ancients too.'

It could, thus, be pondered that in determining the true import of the 'ancients,' Abu Hanifa and others kept in view merely the current human race of the Earth. Obviously, they had absolutely no idea of the abundance of earths in the universe and the dispersion of human races all through them too. So, they were compelled to argue upon the existence of a non-Arabic Qur'an. And those of the exegetes who took pains to suggest the understood, were faced with this very complexity that made them to part with the literal meaning of the Qur'anic text in favor of the figurative one. According to our present understanding, however, the previous revelation of the Qur'an could be in any of the earths of the universe, and upon any of the many human races given existence in their multiple live phases as well. It could even be upon the other human races given existence on our own earth in its previous live phases too. The current statement is general in nature in all respects, and there is absolutely no argument to confine its previous revelation to this very earth and only the present human race. It should be born in mind here that a rather ambiguous concept of seven earths similar to the seven skies had existed with the Muslims since the earliest period. But the earlier exegetes could not look for the previous revelation of the Qur'an in their context as well because the

existence of humans there too wasn't established then, nor were they, in accordance with the profound divine prudence and enormous planning itself, bound in any way to comprehend this fact, as the very beginning of this chapter is making a categorical statement that this splendid feature of the Qur'an would be concealed from the predecessors just to be revealed after a period of time upon the latter people:

110.1) So, they have belied *it*. The tales of what they have been mocking at would come to them in a while.<sup>192</sup>

Besides, another Qur'anic assertion reads as follows:

110.2) You would definitely come to know its reality after a while.<sup>193</sup>

Remember, the earlier exegetes had meant these assertions of revealing the true nature of the Qur'an after a period of time to be when one meets his death or on the occurrence of the Day of Judgment. It is obvious, however, that they are general in nature and there is absolutely no necessity for their particularization. It would rather be more appropriate to consider them to be uniformly common to all our affairs, both worldly and those of the Hereafter. We would, thus, be enlightened with some magnificent realities of the Qur'an both here and the Hereafter too, if it is summarily here, it would be in every detail there:

110.3) The Day when all the mysteries would be revealed.<sup>194</sup>

Consider now the very first verse of the present statement, 'Indeed, this *Qur'an* has been revealed repeatedly by the Lord of all the worlds,' which is providing another significant argument upon the ancient nature of the Qur'an. The Arabic verbs *anzala* and *nazzala* are synonymous with each other and denote 'to reveal.' The Qur'an, however, clearly differentiates between them in their respective usages. If it employs both of them liberally in relation to its own revelation, it confines itself to the use of just the former when it comes to the sending down of the other Scriptures. This made the predecessor exegetes to conclude from it that as all the other Scriptures have been revealed all at once, so only the former verb has been used to describe their one-time revelation, whereas the latter verb has been utilized to depict the gradual and periodic revelation of the Qur'an spread over vast period of time. And whenever it was intended to convey the one-time revelation of the Qur'an as



well, such as chapter 97:1, only the former verb has been preferred on such occasions. It should, however, be kept in mind that this explanation can never be said to be based upon the true import of these verbs, but was only reflective of their temporary and figurative denotations in view of their perceived Qur'anic usages. It should also be remembered that this explanation wasn't even absolute and all-inclusive with the predecessors themselves, as the latter verb has been used in chapter 3:93 of the Qur'an in relation to the revelation of the Torah as well.

Now, when viewed literally, it reveals that an important feature of the derived verbal form *taf'eel*, to which the latter verb *nazzala* too belongs, is exaggeration and abundance. We find its usage in this sense in the Qur'an itself thus:

110.4) The Day when the skies would split into pieces by the cloud and the angels would be made to descend excessively.<sup>195</sup>

Almost all the exegetes of the Qur'an have considered it in this very sense in the current verse. So, when the immediately succeeding verses are literally disclosing the previous revelation of the Qur'an, considering it in its factual denotation in the light of the aforementioned arguments becomes preferable here too. The Qur'an hasn't, thus, been revealed only once previously, but repeatedly many more times as well. So, the mode of expression reveals that this very first verse enjoys the central character in the current statement, and that all the other verses are interpreting and consolidating it. Accordingly, it is in order only to do away with any complexity in considering the first verse in its literal sense that it is explicitly being reiterated again in the concluding verse that the Qur'an has already found existence in the scriptures of the previously extinct people too. It should also be born in mind here that all the three intervening verses of this statement too are, in unison with both of these former and latter verses, revealing another significant aspect of this emerging philosophy of the multiple revelations of the Qur'an, which shall be elaborated upon in due course in the present chapter. Many more of the present type of statements would be discussed in our forthcoming discussion too, which shall clarify the matter even further. It should particularly be noted at this stage that the fundamental principle guiding the Qur'anic comprehension is that its words and phrases have to be considered purely in accordance with

their literal denotation to the greatest possible extent, and once their true import is revealed there remains absolutely no justification whatsoever for showing regard to their previous figurative interpretations. Consider now some more statements that strengthen our present contention even further:

111) Indeed, it is we who have repeatedly sent down the Reminder, and we shall preserve it. We have, without a doubt, sent *it* before you among the groups of the ancients too. But never came to them *with it* a messenger whom they didn't mock at. Thus do we cause it to enter into the hearts of the culprits. These *too* shall not believe in it; such has been the practice of the ancients.<sup>196</sup>

The degree of coherence found in the previous statement concerning the multiple revelations of the Qur'an is to be similarly found in all the five verses of the current statement too with regard to the very same fact. If the previous statement conveyed it through its pronoun, the current statement employs one of its most distinguishing attributes of 'Reminder,' and further describes some of the brevity contained therein. So, the verb *nazzalna* (we have repeatedly sent down) with regard to the Qur'an in the very first verse here clearly conveys the fact of its multiple revelations. It is only to further consolidate this fact that the object of 'sent' in the immediately subsequent verse has very meaningfully been omitted in order to indicate that the thing sent before the holy Prophet among the groups of the ancients as well was nothing other than this Reminder itself. And it is to reinforce this contention even further that the pronoun 'it' in the phrase 'These *too* shall not believe in it' contained in the last verse has been made to designate 'Reminder' in the first verse and convey that the entire talk in the present statement, including all the three intervening verses too, is consistently being carried out in its context alone. We are already witness to many more of such instances of the Qur'anic usage wherein an apparent omission has immediately been disclosed in a marvelous fashion to generate great meanings. Many more of this type would also be presented in due course. It, thus, shows that the statement 'Truly, it is among the scriptures of the ancients too' in the previous statement is being interpreted through 'We have, without a doubt, sent *it* before you among the groups of the ancients too' in the current one.

Besides, it is evident from the statement 'But never came to them a



messenger whom they didn't mock at' that the mockery the messengers were subjected to previously pertained to this very Reminder that they had brought to them excessively. This is the reason why a comparison is being made between them and the current disbelievers of the Qur'an to prophesy that the latter too wouldn't come to believe in it following in the footsteps of the former, and that their present contempt of the Qur'an is only reminiscent of the ancients themselves. Thus, the current statement is elaborating upon the brevity contained in the previous statement. Furthermore, the verses of the current statement together with those of their preceding ones are uncovering another significant aspect of the philosophy of the multiple revelations of the Qur'an, which shall be dealt with later in this chapter. So, our inference of the omitted object of 'sent' in the current statement to be the 'Reminder' itself is further being strengthened through the following two more unmistakable statements as well:

112) They used to say, "If only we had a Reminder from the ancients, we would certainly have been the sincere servants of the Almighty." So they have disbelieved in itself; they shall, in a while, come to know *what they are disbelieving in*.<sup>197</sup>

'Reminder' is once again consistently being described in all the four verses of this statement too. These verses are very clear in their import that the Reminder the disbelievers were yearning after for themselves is nothing other than the present Qur'an itself, which they are opposing so vehemently. This is because the pronoun 'itself' in the last verse is designating 'Reminder' in the first one. Though the demand of the disbelievers was the revelation anew of some known ancient scripture, but they are being dealt a severe blow here by attributing the Qur'an itself to be the ancient one that is being revealed once more.

Consider now as to how intense the similarity of expression is between the passages 'If only we had a Reminder from the ancients' in the current statement and 'Truly, it is among the scriptures of the ancients too' and 'We have, without a doubt, sent *it* before you among the groups of the ancients too' in the previous two statements, which implies the unity of their denotation too. This is the reason why it is immediately being asserted in the current statement through 'they shall, in a while, come to know' that the astounding reality of

the ancient character and the multiplicity of the revelations of the Qur'an would be disclosed only after a while. Remember, this very assertion has also been made earlier on a couple of more occasions through statement nos. 110.1 and 110.2 as well. Furthermore, they too have occurred in the context of this very Reminder, which sheds additional light upon the harmonious and mutually interpretational relationship all these three statements enjoy between them.

Thus, the assertions of keeping the true nature of the Qur'an concealed from the predecessors to be disclosed only to the later generations carry a significant insight in them concerning its own comprehension in the contemporary period. They entail that the predecessors just cannot be criticized or faulted for their respective understanding of the Qur'an, as they were bound only by that in accordance with an enormous divine prudence and unparalleled strategy that is unfolding before us currently.

113) Have they adopted gods besides Him? Say, "Bring your proof then. This is the Reminder of those who are with me, and also the Reminder of those who were before me too." Yet most of them do not know the truth, so they are turning away.<sup>198</sup>

Consider here as to how unequivocal the current statement is in deeming the Qur'an to be the Reminder of not just the followers of the holy Prophet but that of those who were before him too, which absolves us from any further clarification in this regard. Thus, the true import of the truth of the Qur'an being among the scriptures of the ancients and having been sent among the groups of the ancients as contained in the former two statements is further being interpreted in the latter two of them through 'a Reminder from the ancients' and 'the Reminder of those who were before me too' as well. Besides, the previous statements of keeping the earlier revelations of the Qur'an concealed from the predecessors are once again being reinforced here too through 'Yet most of them do not know the truth, so they are turning away.' Consider now 14 more of such statements that are spread all through the Qur'an deliberately and also strengthen our present argument beyond reasonable doubt:

114) If they belie you, so belied were many more messengers before you, who had brought clear signs, scriptures, and the Enlightened Book.<sup>199</sup>



The messengers before the holy Prophet are, according to this verse, said to have been sent with one of the three things. If some of them have been sent with clear signs, others were given scriptures, and still others were bestowed with the Enlightened Book. The revealed books have, thus, been divided into two categories: regular books and the Enlightened Book. It should be born in mind here that the grandeur and distinction enjoyed by the Qur'an among all the revealed scriptures is, in accordance with its own pronouncements, rather unique and beyond any comparison to the rest of them. All the other books have been merely provisional and regional in nature, whereas it is only the Qur'an that is the universal one, teeming with intellectual arguments. This is the reason why it is also known as the Book of Miracles. The Qur'an itself considers it as the 'fairest discourse' in the following verse:

114.1) The Almighty has abundantly revealed the fairest discourse...<sup>200</sup>

Hence, the attribute of 'the Enlightened Book' vis-à-vis 'scriptures' here befits only the Qur'an, and the current statement of the previous messengers too having been sent with it provides another sound and extremely clear argument upon the multiple revelations of the Qur'an. It is, thus, intended in the current statement to console the believers through the holy Prophet that the current belying of the Qur'an by the disbelievers isn't a new phenomenon in any way, but an extremely ancient one wherein the disbelievers of the earlier races too have negated it. So, the current statement of 'so belied were many more messengers before you, who had brought clear signs, scriptures, and the Enlightened Book' and 'But never came to them *with it* a messenger whom they didn't mock at. Thus do we cause it to enter into the hearts of the culprits. These *too* shall not believe in it; such has been the practice of the ancients' contained in statement no. 111 are expressing merely the same reality in two different idioms and are mutually interpreting one another too.

115) They say, "Why doesn't he bring us a sign from his Lord?" *But*, hasn't there come to them the Clear Sign among the former scriptures?<sup>201</sup>

Both the original Arabic terms of *a'yah* (sign) and *bayyinah* (clear sign) are synonymous with each other, and denote 'argument' or 'miracle.' Argument in itself is very clear and illuminating too. Compared to the former term, however, the clarity is more pronounced in the latter. So, 'Clear Sign'

can only indicate the Qur'an here, as it has directly been attributed with the same attribute on the other occasions thus:

115.1) Say, "I am on a Clear Sign from my Lord, and you belie it..."<sup>202</sup>

115.2) Or lest you say, "Had a book revealed upon us too, we would definitely have been more guided than they." So, there has come to you from your Lord a Clear Sign, guidance, and mercy...<sup>203</sup>

The Clear Sign which the holy Prophet is said to be basing himself upon in the former verse cannot be anything other than the Qur'an, because no argument or miracle sent down upon him can be superior to it. This is the reason why a masculine pronoun has irregularly been made to designate it in the very subsequent phrase 'and you belie it' in the original Arabic text when *bayyinah* itself is feminine. Whereas, in the latter verse, in view of the probability that the present disbelievers might try to exonerate themselves on the Day of Judgment that no book had been given to them as well, it is stated in very clear terms that they too have been given a Clear Sign. Moreover, a majority of the exegetes too consider *bayyinah* on both these occasions to be denoting only the Qur'an. *Bayyinah* establishes itself as another of the many attributes of the Qur'an thus. So, on the protest of the disbelievers as to why doesn't the holy Prophet bring to them a sign or a miracle of the divine providence in support of his prophethood, they are being countered here with the statement that what with a mere sign, they have been bestowed with the Clear Sign from among the former scriptures, i.e., the Qur'an. Remember, if the fact of the multiple revelations of the Qur'an is being disclosed here in response to the demand of the disbelievers concerning the revelation of a divine sign, they had been, in reply to their very same query under statement no. 106 too, given the lesson of the multiple creations of man, which forms a significant and vital link in the entire scheme of the multiple revelations of the Qur'an itself. Thus, both of these two statements are mutually reinforcing each other too. Furthermore, if the Qur'an had been termed as 'the Enlightened Book' and 'the fairest discourse' in the previous statement, it is being described in the current one to be 'the Clear Sign among the former scriptures.' This further strengthens our contention there that the most prominent and miraculous of all the revealed scriptures cannot be anyone other than the Qur'an itself.



116) This is a warner from among the former warners.<sup>204</sup>

'Warner' denotes either the messenger or the message he accompanies to warn the people with. Both of these probabilities have been expressed by the predecessors themselves. However, when viewed in its context, this verse appears to be very intensely related to its subsequent verses, which offers precedence only to the latter probability:

116.1) Do you marvel at this discourse then? Keep laughing and do not weep? Negligent? So prostrate before the Almighty and worship him.<sup>205</sup>

It is evident from 'then' (*fa* in the original Arabic) in the very first verse 'Do you marvel at this discourse then?' quoted here that it is associating the current verse with the one 'This is a warner from among the former warners,' occurring previously. This renders the intervening two verses to be the parenthetical expression. This reveals that 'discourse' in the latter verse has been used in apposition only to 'warner' in the former, rendering it to be none other than the Qur'an itself. Consider now the following statement that further strengthens this argument and attributes the Qur'an with the same attribute directly thus:

116.2) A Book whose Signs have been separated such that it is an Arabic Qur'an for the people who know, and a bearer of glad tidings and a warner too.<sup>206</sup>

Thus, the current account of 'This is a warner from among the former warners' fully corresponds to the previous statements of 'Truly, it is among the scriptures of the ancients too' and 'the Clear Sign among the former scriptures.' This shows that the hostile behavior of the disbelievers concerning the Qur'an is being astonished upon here as to how can they doubt its veracity and hold that the holy Prophet himself might have fabricated it when the fact of the matter remains that it has also been revealed previously too. This stunning reality of the Qur'an, thus, requires from them through the subsequent verses of 'Keep laughing and do not weep? Negligent? So prostrate before the Almighty and worship him' that they should fear the Almighty without any further delay and prostrate before him crying and lamenting the past at least now.

117) O you who believe, do not question concerning things which, if made

known to you, may annoy you. Yet if you question concerning them when the Qur'an is being revealed, they would be made known to you. The Almighty has pardoned them (i.e., their past questions), for he is forgiving, forbearing. A people had similarly questioned before you too, and then disbelieved in them.<sup>207</sup>

It can be discerned from the current statement as to how meaningful insinuations the Qur'an makes in the course of just an ordinary discourse. Restraining the believers from asking questions specifically during its own revelation, and conveying in the very next breath that such questions had been asked earlier too is the clearest indication that it has also been revealed previously as well, whose beneficiaries had questioned similarly at the time of its revelation.

118) The Almighty has abundantly revealed the fairest discourse such that it is a Book similar and oft-repeated, with which shiver the skins of those who fear their Lord, then their skins and hearts soften to the divine remembrance. This is the divine guidance, with which he guides whomsoever he wishes; but whomsoever he allows to go astray, there would not be any guide for him. Is he, then, who shields himself with his face against the evil punishment on the Day of Judgment *be the same who is secure therefrom?* And it will be said to the wrong-doers, "Taste the flavor of your own earnings." Their predecessors too had belied *it*, and then the punishment struck them unawares. So the Almighty made them taste humiliation in the worldly life; and the punishment of the Hereafter, would that they knew, would be greater. We have put forth in this Qur'an every kind of similitude for the people in order that they may receive admonition, an Arabic Qur'an, without any crookedness, so that they may fear.<sup>208</sup>

Great coherence is to be found between all the six verses of the current statement wherein some of the new and very vital aspects of the philosophy of the multiple revelations of the Qur'an are being highlighted. As established under statement no. 114.1, 'the fairest discourse' signifies the Qur'an here. According to the Arabic syntax, 'Book' is appearing in apposition to 'the fairest discourse.' Likewise, 'similar' and 'oft-repeated' are occurring as the fundamental attributes of the 'Book.' It is very much evident from their general nature together with their current context and also our foregoing



discussion that both of these attributes pertain to the Qur'an as a whole, rather than to any of its specific parts, as interpreted figuratively by the predecessor exegetes due to the lack of any other alternative meaning previously.

So, the very first verse here is, through the use of *nazzala* once again, conveying the abundance of the revelations of the Qur'an. This is further being reinforced through the attribute of 'oft-repeated' as well. And the other attribute of 'similar' suggests that when this solitary Book is being revealed repeatedly, all of its revelations are only similar to each other. That is to say that they all enjoy general similarity between them, rather than absolute conformity, which is quite evident from the usage of this word and its derivatives on other occasions in the Qur'an:

118.1) ... They shall be given similar things...<sup>209</sup>

118.2) ... Similar are their hearts...<sup>210</sup>

It is, thus, not at all necessary for all the different revelations of the Qur'an to be uniform in every respect, but general uniformity is maintained between them with the mere exception of the essential changes that are required to be made in them in consideration of those upon whom they are supposed to be revealed. It is a self-evident truth that the various nations existing in the present human race, the messengers and the sequence in which they have been sent in them, or the traits and qualities of the current bearers of the Qur'an and so on are entirely different from those of the other races given existence elsewhere. And if the Qur'an has to be revealed upon them too, then it may need modifications in it accordingly. It could rightly be gathered from it that these different revelations do not undergo such modifications in them that they lose the epithet of 'similar' between them altogether, and each of them keep an independent existence like the Torah, the Gospel, the Qur'an etc. that have been revealed upon the present humanity, and none of them could be said to be similar to any other of them. It should particularly be noted that the current fundamental attributes of 'the fairest discourse' and 'Clear Sign' too completely rule out the possibility of the Qur'an being similar to any of the other revealed books the present humanity is familiar with.

This quite clearly establishes that the present Qur'an too is only similar to some other Qur'an and that there exists a source or fountainhead from which it has emanated as one of its offshoots or a subsidiary after undergoing

the necessary changes in accordance with the needs and requirements of the present human race. This aspect too finds a mention in the Qur'an in very clear terms at another place thus:

118.3) ...For each period is a Book. The Almighty erases whatever he wishes and retains *whatever he wishes*, for he has with him the Parent Book.<sup>211</sup>

Notice the degree of harmony these verses enjoy with the current philosophy of the multiple revelations of the Qur'an. It has to be remembered that the immediately preceding verses of this statement, to which the current verses too are intensely related, pertain to the Qur'an itself. We will, however, deal with this precise context only after a while. Another argument in support of this contention is the appearance of 'Book' in the backdrop of 'the Parent Book.' This suggests that in the current verses too, on the very lines of the ones immediately preceding them, the entire talk is being carried out in the context of only the Qur'an, and that 'Book' denotes the Qur'an itself. This is as if it is being said: "for each period is a Qur'an," all of which emanating from the Parent Book after undergoing the necessary modifications in accordance with the respective contexts of the nations upon whom they are intended to be revealed.

When the Qur'an has abundantly been revealed previously too similar to its present manifestation, both of these aspects are being dealt with separately in the subsequent verses of the current statement. 'Their predecessors too had belied' is, thus, disclosing those very people upon whom it had been revealed previously too. Notice that the object of 'belied' has very meaningfully been omitted here again. We are already witness to such eloquent omission and stunning disclosure in the very next breath with respect to the same object in the earlier passage of 'We have, without a doubt, sent *it* before you among the groups of the ancients too' under statement no. 111 too. This is the reason why the current Qur'an is being distinguished from the earlier ones through 'this Qur'an' in the fifth verse. Remember, 'Qur'an' is a proper noun, which could only be attributed with a demonstrative adjective 'this' when it has to be distinguished from some other Qur'an. Subsequently, 'an Arabic Qur'an' as a common noun, which is appearing as a circumstantial phrase to modify 'this Qur'an,' further reinforces this line of reasoning and conveys that our



present Qur'an is just one of the many Qur'ans revealed merely in one Arabic language! This also discloses that Arabic isn't at all the language of a particular people of just our present human race, but could also be that of one or more of the other races given existence elsewhere in the universe too. Besides, our argument concerning 'the Parent Book' and 'an Arabic Qur'an' is further strengthened through the following statement as well:

118.4) By the Clear Book, we have made that an Arabic Qur'an in order that you may reflect. Indeed, it is inscribed in the Parent Book with us, exalted and full of wisdom.<sup>212</sup>

'Clear Book' here is, in reality, the very same 'Parent Book' that is with the Almighty and has been modified and molded in the form of the present Arabic Qur'an. Accordingly, the thing upon which the oath is being taken (i.e., *muqassam bihi* in Arabic) and the one for which it is being taken (*muqassam alaih*) both become two distinct entities without recourse to any figurative interpretation, which the earlier exegetes had taken to. Thus, the Almighty is swearing by the Clear Book to state that it is the very fountain-head from which the present Arabic Qur'an has been sourced. Subsequently, the pronoun 'it' is designating 'an Arabic Qur'an' to further strengthen the contention that it enjoys an exalted place in relation to all the other Qur'ans that have emanated from the Parent Book. 'The Parent Book' is, thus, appearing in apposition to 'the Clear Book.' Likewise, the epithets of 'the Preserved Tablet' (*lauh mahfooz*) and 'the Concealed Book' (*kitab maknoon*) mentioned elsewhere in the Qur'an too denote the same Parent Book:

118.5) Nay, this is a glorious Qur'an, *inscribed* in a Preserved Tablet.<sup>213</sup>

118.6) This is, indeed, a noble Qur'an, *inscribed* in a Concealed Book.<sup>214</sup>

Similarly, 'Book,' 'the Wise Book,' and 'the Wise Reminder' as well imply the same Parent Book. Besides, notice also the consistency of expression that exists between the current statement and the one contained under statement no. 116.1. After disclosing the reality of the multiple revelations of the Qur'an, if the disbelievers were called upon there through the passage 'Do you then marvel at this discourse? Keep laughing and do not weep? Negligent? So prostrate before the Almighty and worship him,' to fear the Almighty as a result, this very fear of the believers is being portrayed here

too through 'with which shiver the skins of those who fear their Lord; then their skins and hearts soften to the divine remembrance.' Thus, another instance of the existence of a meaningful correlation between both these statements is also established.

Our foregoing discussion makes it abundantly clear that the term 'Qur'an' in its own terminology applies to both the Parent Book as well as any of its offshoots equally, and that all of them are one and the same in the divine wisdom. It, hence, readily substitutes the Parent Book with any of its offshoots on one occasion, an offshoot with the Parent Book on another, and one offshoot with another one on yet another occasion. This is because they do not possess any difference, either literal or meaningful, between them other than the inevitable ones, as it wouldn't otherwise be possible to consider all of them to be merely one book. Many more of such statements would be presented in due course, which would clarify the matter even further. Consider now the following verse which very comprehensively summarizes all these conclusions thus:

119) I do swear by what you see, and also by what you do not see. That, indeed, is the word of a noble messenger. It is not the word of a poet. Little do you believe. Nor is it the word of a soothsayer. Little do you remember. *In reality*, it has repeatedly been revealed by the Lord of all the worlds.<sup>215</sup>

It is evident from this statement that it is being sworn by two different things: one that is visible to us, and the other that is invisible. Ostensibly, however, the true identity of both these things has been kept concealed from us in a very meaningful way. But, by making the pronoun 'that' in the subsequent verse designate 'what' on both the previous occasions, it is being conveyed that they are, as a matter of fact, none other than the Qur'an itself. Though only the current Qur'an is before us and there are still many more invisible ones finding a place in the other parts of the universe, the pronoun 'that' in its singular form to indicate all of them conveys that they are in essence one and the same. Now, as to how could this be possible, and as to how could a singular be construed as a plural, is being answered at the end that the same Book has repeatedly been revealed by the Lord of all the worlds. So, this Book is both singular as well as plural simultaneously. Furthermore, the phrase 'Little do you remember' is very deeply associated with another



significant aspect of the philosophy of the multiple revelations of the Qur'an, which shall be dealt with very shortly.

In the same way as the Qur'an has been attributed with 'Clear Sign' under statement no. 115, it has been assigned the characteristic of 'Sign' as well. It has to be remembered that there too it was only on the demand of a 'sign' from the disbelievers that the Qur'an itself was declared to be the Clear Sign. Listed below are five more instances from the same usage, which strengthen the multiple revelations of the Qur'an further:

120) Indeed, we have propounded every kind of similitude for the people in this Qur'an. If you have brought a Sign to them, the disbelievers will surely say, "You are nothing but liars."<sup>216</sup>

First of all, the current Qur'an is being distinguished here from the other Qur'ans through the use of the demonstrative adjective 'this.' And this very Qur'an is metaphorically being termed as 'a Sign' subsequently too. This establishes that the significance of the present Qur'an is merely a sign of the divine providence. The following statement reinforces this contention even further:

120.1) The Book has repeatedly been revealed by the God, the all-mighty, the all-knowing, forgiver of sins, acceptor of repentance, severe in punishment, and lord of power. There is no god besides him, and unto him is the return. Only the disbelievers quarrel concerning *these* Signs of the Almighty. Let not their going about in the land deceive you then.<sup>217</sup>

It has to be remembered here that *a'yah* has also been used in the Qur'an to denote its verses too apart from the usual 'sign' or 'argument.' But, nowhere has it been used as a governing word of a genitive construction in relation to the Almighty, his adjectives, or pronouns for this purpose. In this latter case, thus, it always indicates only the latter meaning such as 'signs of the Almighty,' 'signs of our Lord,' 'His signs,' 'my signs,' 'our signs' etc. It is, hence, very much obvious from the current statement that in the same way as the present Qur'an was referred to as a Sign in the previous statement, here too the different revelations of the Qur'an are once again metaphorically being described in the last verse as 'the Signs of the Almighty' after directly conveying the fact of its multiple revelations in the first one.

121) When we have replaced one Sign with another – the Almighty knows what he is revealing repeatedly very well – they say that it is you who has forged it. Nevertheless, most of them do not know. Say, "The Holy Spirit has repeatedly revealed it from your Lord with truth in order that it firms up the believers and serves as guidance and glad tidings to those who surrender." We know what they say very well that it is only a human who teaches him. The language of the person they imply is alien, while this is plain Arabic.<sup>218</sup>

It is clear from every word of this statement that the disbelievers' accusation of forgery by the holy Prophet concerns the entire Qur'an, contrary to one or two of its verses. There are still many more of such statements at other places in the Qur'an, such as:

121.1) The disbelievers say, "This *Qur'an* is a pure lie that he has forged himself, and others have helped him at it..."<sup>219</sup>

121.2) Do they say that he himself has forged this *Qur'an*. Say, "Then produce a chapter similar to it, and summon *to your aid* whomsoever you can apart from the Almighty, if you are truthful."<sup>220</sup>

Another argument in support of this contention is the divine response of 'The Holy Spirit has repeatedly revealed it from your Lord with truth' to this accusation of forgery wherein a masculine pronoun 'it' has irregularly been made to designate the feminine *a'yah* in the original text to mean with it the entire Qur'an. Also, had the accusation been the forging of one or two verses by the holy Prophet, the entire Qur'an itself wouldn't have been reported to have been revealed repeatedly on this occasion. This again establishes that here too *a'yah* denotes 'Sign' or 'Qur'an.' This renders the passage under discussion to read 'When we have replaced one Qur'an with another – the Almighty knows what he is repeatedly revealing very well – they say that it is you who has forged it.' And this is the reason why it is immediately being asserted through 'Nevertheless, most of them do not know' that most of the people do not know this great reality of the Qur'an. Remember, under statement no. 113 too this very message has similarly been conveyed through 'Yet most of them do not know the truth, so they are turning away.' Thus, on the charge of the forgery of the Qur'an, the disbelievers are being countered with the disclosure of the majestic reality of its multiple revelations. And it



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121) When we have replaced one Sign with another – the Almighty knows what he is revealing repeatedly very well – they say that it is you who has forged it. Nevertheless, most of them do not know. Say, "The Holy Spirit has repeatedly revealed it from your Lord with truth in order that it firms up the believers and serves as guidance and glad tidings to those who surrender." We know what they say very well that it is only a human who teaches him. The language of the person they imply is alien, while this is plain Arabic.<sup>218</sup>

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is only to generate this very meaning that the statement of 'the Almighty knows what he is repeatedly revealing very well' is being advanced as a parenthetical expression in the midst of this entire talk.

122) That which we are reciting unto you is from among the Signs and the Wise Reminder too.<sup>221</sup>

This statement is in complete harmony with the philosophy of the multiple revelations of the Qur'an and it further strengthens our line of reasoning taken in both the previous two statements too. The current verse is, thus, conveying, in very obvious terms, that the Book revealed upon the holy Prophet simultaneously concerns both the Signs as well as the Wise Reminder. This clearly suggests that the present Qur'an is merely one of the many Signs (offshoots) emanated from the Wise Reminder, which is also known as the Parent Book. This further reinforces the principle laid down under statement no. 118 that the Wise Reminder, the Preserved Tablet, and the Parent Book are all synonymous with each other. This contention gets a further boost from the following statement too:

123) A Book whose Signs have been secured and thereafter (i.e., from time to time) separated (i.e., individually revealed) from the one who is all-wise and well-acquainted.<sup>222</sup>

It could be noted here that if the previous statement had regarded the present Qur'an to be merely one of the many Signs having emanated from the Parent Book, the current statement is, in its complete inversion, making a very clear assertion that it is only a period of time after the drawing out of all the Signs from the Parent Book and making them secure that they are successively being revealed from time to time. Remember, the original Arabic verb *fas'ala* used in this verse denotes both 'to elucidate' as well as 'to separate,' and in the present context it is only the latter meaning that gets precedence. Besides, a vital argument in support of *a'yaat*, the plural of *a'yah*, denoting only the Signs, contrary to the verses of the Qur'an, is the particle *thumma* too used here to denote 'thereafter' in the passage 'secured and thereafter separated,' as otherwise a time interval would be established between the securing of the verses and their ultimate elucidation, and also their dual and independent existence in the Qur'an too becomes indispensable, which are devoid of any logic and are contrary to the fact of the matter as well. The

current statement, thus, further interprets and reinforces the previous one. It should be born in mind at this stage that the present 'Book,' which we have interpreted as the 'Parent Book,' is the very same that statement no. 118.6 considers as the Concealed Book in which the present Qur'an is inscribed. The following verses reinforce this contention even further:

124) Revealed repeatedly by the compassionate and the merciful, a Book whose Signs have been separated such that it is an Arabic Qur'an for the people who understand.<sup>223</sup>

'A Book' here too, on the lines of the previous statement, indicates the Parent Book. Contrary to that statement, however, the fact of its multiple revelations is also being mentioned at the very outset here in order to drive home the same point. And the immediately subsequent phrase 'whose Signs have been separated' is casting further light upon this reality and making an assertion that all the Signs or offshoots of the Parent Book have also been separated in view only of their proposed sending down upon different human races. And finally, 'an Arabic Qur'an,' which is appearing as a circumstantial phrase to modify 'A Book,' further emphasizes this statement and conveys that the present Qur'an is merely one of the offshoots that has emanated from the Parent Book. Thus, all our contentions concerning 'Book,' 'thereafter,' and 'separated' in the previous statement get further strengthened.

It can now be pondered as to how significantly harmonious the current statement is with the one contained in statement no. 118.4 and as to how consistently both of them are conveying the very same message resorting to two different expressions. If the true import of the Clear Book has directly been stated there to be the Parent Book, the same message is being conveyed here too through merely 'the Book' with the additional statement of its repeated revelations. Again, if the present Qur'an was stated there to be merely an Arabic one having emanated from the Parent Book, here as well it is stated that one of the many offshoots drawn from the Parent Book is being revealed as an Arabic Qur'an. Thus, the independently ascertained meanings of both of these statements get further reinforced beyond refutation.

125) This Qur'an is not such as which could be forged by any one other than the Almighty. It is, on the contrary, a confirmation of that which preceded



is only to generate this very meaning that the statement of 'the Almighty knows what he is repeatedly revealing very well' is being advanced as a parenthetical expression in the midst of this entire talk.

122) That which we are reciting unto you is from among the Signs and the Wise Reminder too.<sup>221</sup>

This statement is in complete harmony with the philosophy of the multiple revelations of the Qur'an and it further strengthens our line of reasoning taken in both the previous two statements too. The current verse is, thus, conveying, in very obvious terms, that the Book revealed upon the holy Prophet simultaneously concerns both the Signs as well as the Wise Reminder. This clearly suggests that the present Qur'an is merely one of the many Signs (offshoots) emanated from the Wise Reminder, which is also known as the Parent Book. This further reinforces the principle laid down under statement no. 118 that the Wise Reminder, the Preserved Tablet, and the Parent Book are all synonymous with each other. This contention gets a further boost from the following statement too:

123) A Book whose Signs have been secured and thereafter (i.e., from time to time) separated (i.e., individually revealed) from the one who is all-wise and well-acquainted.<sup>222</sup>

It could be noted here that if the previous statement had regarded the present Qur'an to be merely one of the many Signs having emanated from the Parent Book, the current statement is, in its complete inversion, making a very clear assertion that it is only a period of time after the drawing out of all the Signs from the Parent Book and making them secure that they are successively being revealed from time to time. Remember, the original Arabic verb *fas 'sala* used in this verse denotes both 'to elucidate' as well as 'to separate,' and in the present context it is only the latter meaning that gets precedence. Besides, a vital argument in support of *a 'yaat*, the plural of *a 'yah*, denoting only the Signs, contrary to the verses of the Qur'an, is the particle *thumma* too used here to denote 'thereafter' in the passage 'secured and thereafter separated,' as otherwise a time interval would be established between the securing of the verses and their ultimate elucidation, and also their dual and independent existence in the Qur'an too becomes indispensable, which are devoid of any logic and are contrary to the fact of the matter as well. The

current statement, thus, further interprets and reinforces the previous one. It should be born in mind at this stage that the present 'Book,' which we have interpreted as the 'Parent Book,' is the very same that statement no. 118.6 considers as the Concealed Book in which the present Qur'an is inscribed. The following verses reinforce this contention even further:

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125) This Qur'an is not such as which could be forged by any one other than the Almighty. It is, on the contrary, a confirmation of that which preceded



it and a separation of the Book. There is no doubt in its being from the Lord of all the worlds. Do they say that he himself has forged it? Say, "Then produce a chapter similar to it, and summon *to your aid* whomsoever you can apart from the Almighty, if you are truthful." Nay, they have belied that whose knowledge they could not comprehend, and whose truth has not been disclosed to them as yet either. So did their predecessors too belie *it*; then see as to how the end of the wrongdoers was. And of them there are those who shall repose their faith in it, and there are also those who shall not repose their faith in it. Your Lord knows the corrupters very well.<sup>224</sup>

The Qur'an mentions its own confirmation of the previously revealed scriptures on a total of 15 occasions through six varied phrases, namely 'confirmation of that which preceded it,' 'confirmer of that which preceded it,' 'confirmer of the book which preceded it,' 'confirmer of an Arabic language,' 'confirmer of that which had been with you too,' and 'confirmer of that which had been with them too.' However, nowhere has the specific confirmation of any particular book been mentioned at these places. Both the Gospel and Prophet Jesus (pbuh) are, in contrast, stated explicitly to be confirming the Torah on four different occasions through two phrases, namely 'confirmer of the Torah before me' and 'confirmer of the Torah before it.' Let us now consider the former 15 instances from another perspective. The one which the Qur'an is reported to be confirming is uniformly singular in number at all these places, and nowhere has it appeared in its plural form. It is, thus, evident from all these facts that confirmation of merely one book is intended at all these places. That book, however, cannot be either the Torah or the Gospel as the Qur'an cannot be expected to confirm either of them as it repeatedly considers them to have been distorted by their respective followers. Now when the previous revelations of the Qur'an have also conclusively been established there cannot be any alternative other than subscribing to the great reality that the present Qur'an is only confirming its preceding manifestation at all these places and presenting it in its current form with utmost accuracy and authenticity in accordance with its fundamental attribute of 'guardian' as contained in chapter 5:48, which shall be dealt with under the subsequent statement. So far as the true import of the phrases 'confirmer of that which had been with you' and 'confirmer of that which had

been with them' are concerned, they shall be taken up in due course.

After this preliminary discourse, consider the verses of this statement which are all very coherently connected with each other. In the very first verse, thus, the demonstrative adjective 'this' in the phrase 'this Qur'an' is distinguishing the present Qur'an from another one. Then, on the charge of forgery by the disbelievers, they are being contradicted with the statement 'It is, on the contrary, a confirmation of that which preceded it' and asked as to how could this great Book be forged when it has also been revealed previously too and that it is merely the current manifestation of its previous one. And if, on the contrary, this confirmation is taken to be that of the Torah or the Gospel, a relevant question arises as to why couldn't a book that confirms them be forged? Can a book be assumed to be divinely revealed just because it confirms the Torah or the Gospel? Besides, the subsequent phrase 'and a separation of the Book' provides another compelling argument in support of this contention as it provides the very same message that has already been offered by the passage 'a Book whose Signs have been separated' in the previous statement. Thus, the combined statement of 'It is, on the contrary, a confirmation of that which preceded it and a separation of the Book' conveys that when the different offshoots of the Parent Book are separated and time and again revealed one after the other, then each of its subsequent revelation confirms the earlier one. As such, the current statement further reinforces the previous one through an altogether different expression.

Furthermore, the subsequent passage 'Nay, they have belied that whose knowledge they could not comprehend, and whose truth has not been disclosed to them as yet either' is further strengthening this line of reasoning as it considers one of the reasons behind the accusation of forgery by the disbelievers to be that they have neither got to the bottom of the Qur'anic knowledge and its enormous philosophy of the universe themselves nor has even the true nature of its multiple revelations been divulged to them as it is being disclosed to us today. Just ponder as to how greatly in agreement this statement is with 'So, they have belied *it*. The tales of what they have been mocking at would come to them in a while,' 'You would definitely come to know its reality after a while,' and 'So they have disbelieved in itself; they shall, in a while, come to know *what they are disbelieving in*' contained in statement nos. 110.1, 110.2, and 112 respectively. If those statements predicted



the disclosure of the true reality of the Qur'an in future, the current one is making an assertion that it is due to its non-disclosure that the disbelievers are disputing it. All these statements are, thus, mutually interpreting and reinforcing one another.

It could again be noted that in order to strengthen this contention even further the object of 'belie' in the immediately subsequent passage 'So did their predecessors too belie' has again very meaningfully been omitted. It has to be remembered that this very strategy has been followed in the earlier statements of 'We have, without a doubt, sent *it* before you among the groups of the ancients too' and 'Those earlier to them too had belied *it*' under statement nos. 111 and 118 respectively too. So, in exactly the same way as the object of 'sent' in the former instance was initially omitted just to be subsequently disclosed through the pronoun 'it' designating 'the Reminder,' the omitted object of 'belie' in the current one too is being divulged through the same pronoun designating the Qur'an in the passage 'And of them there are those who shall repose their faith in it' to convey that it is nothing other than the Qur'an itself. It should be born in mind here that all these verses are together making a very concerted statement concerning only the Qur'an and absolutely no other book finds a mention in them. So, the current passage is disclosing the condition of the disbelievers of the previous Qur'an that they too had belied it without knowing its true nature in the same way as the present ones are indulging in. This clearly suggests that wherever and upon whichever human race the Qur'an has been revealed in the past the same current strategy of concealing its true nature from the predecessors and revealing it upon the latter people in the light of their own arts and sciences has been followed in order to disclose its intellectual marvel upon the respective disbelievers. The following statement further strengthens the current one thus:

126) We have sent down the Book to you with truth such that it is a confirmer of the Book which preceded it and a guardian over it...<sup>225</sup>

After the statement here of the Qur'an confirming its previous revelation, a further emphasis is also being laid upon it that it also guards it in every respect. That is to say that the Qur'an in its current manifestation is presenting to us its previous self with great accuracy and absolute authentic-

ity. Remember, the subsequent passage 'to every one of you we have made a path and a clear path. Had the Almighty wished, he would definitely have made you one nation, but he wishes to test you in whatever he has given you. So, hasten in good deeds' of this very verse which has already been dealt with under statement no. 89 is disclosing a significant aspect of the philosophy of the multiple creations of man with which the current philosophy of the multiple revelations of the Qur'an too is deeply related. It could, thus, be pondered as to how comprehensively both these passages of the current verse are getting intertwined with each other as essential links of a wider philosophy even after each of them having been considered independently in total isolation of the other. So, as to what could further be meant with this guarding of the previous manifestation of the Qur'an is being described at another place thus:

127) Those who have disbelieved in the Reminder when it has come to them *should know* that it is, indeed, a mighty Book. Falsehood has neither approached it previously nor can it draw near to it subsequently. It has been revealed repeatedly by the Wise and the Praiseworthy. The Word that is being had with you is the one that we already had with the other messengers before you too. Surely your Lord is the possessor of forgiveness and of painful punishment too.<sup>226</sup>

The talk of the multiplicity of the revelations of the Qur'an has commenced with 'Reminder' once again. This is the reason why it is subsequently being attributed with the adjective of 'mighty' to further state that falsehood hasn't at all touched it any time during its previous revelations nor will approach it during its subsequent revelations as well. This very clearly suggests that it is destined to be repeatedly revealed in the future as well! So, the phrase 'Falsehood has neither approached it previously nor can it draw near to it subsequently' is also interpreting 'guardian over its earlier revelation' mentioned in the previous statement. And the passage 'It has repeatedly been revealed by the Wise and the Praiseworthy' is conveying this very message continuously for the third time in this statement with the subsequent one 'The Word that is being had with you is the one that we already had with the other messengers before you too' providing further emphasis to it that the Book given to the holy Prophet is the same that has



already been given to many other prophets earlier to him too. Remember, 'Word' (*qawl* in Arabic) is an attribute of the Qur'an itself:

127.1) Indeed, this is a distinguishing Word.<sup>227</sup>

127.2) Did they not ponder over the Word or has anything come to them which did not come to their forefathers of yore?<sup>228</sup>

When the previous multiple revelations of the Qur'an have very clearly and convincingly been established with recourse to such varied statements and in such diverse perspectives, it is but natural for a pertinent question to arise as to what might be the real objective behind this astounding phenomenon. And at a time when the multiple creations of man too have been established in similar fashion, the question whether they bear any correlation between them assumes added significance. If the answer is in the affirmative, then what might be the other related aspects of this dual philosophy? Thus, when the facts of the creation of the present man for testing him in all the earths of all the seven skies and his consecutive sojourns in quite a few of them previously too are born in mind, then his encounter with the Qur'an somewhere or the other during the course of this extensive journey also gets established naturally. This is because all the previous revelations of the Qur'an have taken place only on the many different human races given existence in one or the other earths of the universe and in one or the other of their live phases. So, the Qur'an commences its further guidance in this regard thus:

128) *Alif Lam Mim*. This is that Book in which there is no doubt, a guidance to the god-fearing. Those who believe in the Unseen, offer prayers, and spend out of what we have provided them. And those who believe in what has been sent down to you and what has been sent down before you, and are convinced of the Hereafter. Those are the ones who are upon guidance from their Lord; those are the ones who are successful. As for those who have *already* disbelieved, alike it is to them whether you warn them or do not warn them, they shall not believe.<sup>229</sup>

After the chapter 'Opening,' these are the foremost six verses of the Qur'an, through whom it is itself being introduced to the present human race. So, at the very outset, the Book on hand is deliberately being referred with the unusual 'that,' which denotes something more distant, rather than the more

appropriate 'this,' which indicates something closer. Besides, the phrase 'that Book,' according to the syntax, is occurring as the predicate whose subject has very meaningfully been omitted. The implied statement would, thus, be: 'This is that Book.' This clearly suggests that the present Book isn't at all anything new, but is an ancient 'that' which has also been revealed previously too.

Consider this phrase once more. A book at hand is introduced to an addressee through the statement "This is that Book" or merely "that Book" and an attempt is made to stir up his memory only when he had already been familiar with it sometime in the past. This verse is, thus, making an exceptionally far-reaching and quite a revolutionary suggestion that the present human race had been familiar with this ancient Book previously too and that it does exist within its subconscious even today!! Though that stupendous aspect of this magnificent Book had been kept concealed from it thus far, it is, however, being reminded of it today and its subconscious is being stimulated that it is precisely the same 'that' Book it had come across in the past as well.

Note particularly that under statement no. 113 above too the Qur'an has been described as 'the Reminder of those who are with me, and also the Reminder of those who were before me too' and asserted that since most of the people do not know this great reality concerning it they are turning away from it. Similarly, under statement no. 112 too it was declared to be 'a Reminder from the ancients' whose truth would be disclosed to man only after a period of time. Also, under statement no. 119 too it was affirmed to have been repeatedly revealed and wondered through 'Little do you remember' that we have failed miserably at recollecting it. Besides, 'reminder' (*zikhra* in Arabic) itself is the one that causes a person to recollect something that has slipped away from the memory. It flows from this discussion, thus, that the Qur'an isn't at all in any way a new or exclusive book for the man today, but it is in its present manifestation merely a Reminder of its ancient association with him that has been erased from his memory in his current life. It could once again be pondered now as to how meaningful the previous declarations of the Qur'an were, on the accusation of its forgery by the disbelievers, that it has also been repeatedly revealed previously too and that it is only affirming its own earlier self.



This is the reason why it is being prophesied through the phrase 'a guidance to the god-fearing' that even though this Book is continually being revealed upon man presently too on the lines of its previous revelations, it will, however, be a guide only to those who had feared and adopted it in their earlier lives as well. And this is why they are being pointed out with 'those' instead of the more appropriate 'these' in the subsequent passage of 'Those are the ones who are upon guidance from their Lord' to convey that they are the very people who continued to be on path of guidance unwaveringly all through their previous lives. Similarly, the following verse 'As for those who have *already* disbelieved, alike it is to them whether you warn them or do not warn them, they shall not believe' unmistakably suggests that the disbelievers of the previous lives shall never repose their faith in the Qur'an in their present life too. These are, thus, the very facts established in various idioms all through the previous chapter that howsoever lives the believers and the disbelievers are endowed with, they shall remain steadfast to their respective behaviors all the time. The following statement reinforces this contention still further:

129) They had solemnly sworn by the Almighty that if there came to them a sign they would surely believe in it. Say, "The Signs are certainly with the Almighty." But what will make you realize that whenever they come they shall not believe. We have turned aside their hearts and eyes in the same way they had disbelieved in it (i.e., the Qur'an) for the first time, and have let them wander in their bewilderment.<sup>230</sup>

A great degree of consistency is to be found between both the verses of this statement. In the same way as the Qur'an itself was, on the demand under statement no. 115 of the revelation of a divine sign by the disbelievers, declared to be the Clear Sign, here too, on their very same desire, a broad hint is being given to them that they certainly do not realize those Signs even though they keep coming to them time after time. Thus, on their demand of merely one sign, the repeated sending down of multiple Signs to them in their own subconscious state and their persistent disbelief in them all the time are being mentioned here. And as to what could be meant by these divine Signs is being disclosed through 'We have turned aside their hearts and eyes in the same way as they had disbelieved in it for the first time' in the subsequent verse by making the pronoun 'it' (i.e., the Qur'an) in it substantively designating the

'Signs' themselves to generate the meaning that in the same way as the present Book had come to them earlier too in the form of a divine Sign this time it has come to them as another of its Signs and that it would continue to visit them in the form of still many more Signs in the future as well. But, as they had disbelieved in it the very first time it had come to them, their insight and eyesight have been turned aside from comprehending the truth and they have failed miserably in realizing it and would never come to believe it in their future lives as well.

It can now be observed as to how compellingly the current statement is strengthening both the previous one and the one contained under statement no. 120 as well. To consolidate this contention even further, consider once again the earlier expressions of 'Whenever a Fresh Reminder has come to them from the compassionate Lord, they have always turned aside from it,' 'Whenever a Fresh Reminder has come to them from their Lord, they have always listened to it playfully,' and 'Whenever a Sign from among the Signs of their Lord has come to them, they have always turned aside from it. So, *this time too*, when it has come to them, they have belied the truth (i.e., the Qur'an)' described under statement nos. 97-99 respectively, which asserted that the true nature of the Reminder or the Sign being sent down repeatedly afresh to the present man earlier too would be disclosed to him only after a while. Now, can it be anything other than the Qur'an and its former multiple revelations being laid bare to us today? The following three more statements, thus, reinforce the former repeated revelations of the Qur'an upon us in the form of Fresh Signs even further:

130) *These are* those Signs of the Clear Book. We have sent it down as an Arabic Qur'an that you may reflect. We shall relate to you the fairest of the stories as we have revealed to you this Qur'an ...<sup>231</sup>

With recourse to a similar expression of 'By the Clear Book, we have made that an Arabic Qur'an that you may reflect' under statement no. 118.4 it has been conveyed that the Clear or Parent Book has been sent down upon the present man in the form of merely one Arabic Qur'an. Besides, under statement no. 124 too, through the passage 'a Book whose Signs have been separated such that it is an Arabic Qur'an for the people who understand,' another message has been given that it is only after the separation of all the



Signs of the Parent Book just one of them has been revealed as the present Arabic Qur'an. It now appears from these statements that both of them have been clubbed together in the current one to affirm: '*These are* those Signs of the Clear Book.' This is the reason why the present Arabic Qur'an is again being distinguished here from the rest of them through the phrase 'this Qur'an' subsequently. Now, the objective behind referring these Signs with the unusual 'those' instead of the more appropriate 'these' cannot be anything different from the one already substantiated under statement no. 128 concerning the phrase '*This is* that Book.' That is to say that in the same manner in which the present Qur'an was designated there as 'that Book' to generate the meaning that it is the very book the present man has encountered with previously too, here again the same message is once again being repeated to make a further addition that his previous encounter with it wasn't at all a solitary one but he has, in fact, come across it repeatedly several times in the form of multiple Signs. Thus, it is these very Signs that the statement no. 99 speaks of through 'Whenever a Sign from among the Signs of their Lord has come to them, they have always turned aside from it. So, *this time too*, when it has come to them, they have belied the truth' and undertakes to disclose their true nature in due course. And it is very much evident now that the current statement just endeavors to arouse that very reality in the human minds through the phrase '*These are* those Signs of the Clear Book.' Thus, the above-mentioned verses are interpreting and strengthening the current statement. Remember, the present type of expressions have also been repeated in the beginnings of the chapters 10, 13, 15, 26, 27, 28, and 31 too to denote the very same meaning.

131) Indeed, we have swapped it amongst them repeatedly that they may receive admonition; yet most people disbelieved it. Had we wished, we would have sent to every habitation a *separate* warner; therefore, do not listen to the disbelievers and strive against them with it (i.e., the Qur'an) with utmost strenuousness.<sup>232</sup>

All the three verses of the current statement are very coherently related with each other and appear as a parenthetical expression right in the middle of an organized discussion on the rain and oceanic waters. The first and obvious sign of this consistency is the occurrence of the entire talk in the

context of the disbelievers alone. If this conversation concerning the disbelievers has commenced with 'yet most people disbelieved it' in the very first verse, it has been concluded in the last verse with 'therefore, do not follow the disbelievers' through the use of the sentence connector 'therefore.' In this fashion it is very much clear now that the thing the holy Prophet is being ordained to strive against the disbelievers with in the last verse is the very same that is being stated in the first verse to have been repeatedly swapped amongst them for their own admonition. And when that thing in the last verse is, according to a majority of the exegetes, the Qur'an itself, then the same thing follows out of necessity in the first verse as well. Remember, the true identity of this thing had been an extremely contentious one among the earlier exegetes and no unanimity had been found between them on this score. However, Qurtubi too considers it to be the Qur'an itself.

Thus, by making the pronoun 'it' in the passage 'repeatedly swapped it' of the first verse referring to the Qur'an, it is being conveyed that it has time and again been revealed upon the present human race. It should be born in mind here that *sarafa* in Arabic is a verb to denote 'to exchange one thing with another.' The same word is used to signify the exchanging or swapping of the currencies too. The current *sarafa* is its derived form and implies exaggeration and abundance similar to *nazzala* earlier, and, thus, represents 'to swap repeatedly.' It is only to reinforce this contention even further that it is immediately being stated through 'Had we wished, we would have sent to every habitation a *separate* warner' that had the Almighty so desired he wouldn't have revealed the same book repeatedly upon the current human race, but he would have sent down upon it altogether new books each time. Remember, it has already been established under statement no. 116 that 'warner' denotes 'book' too. And again by making the pronoun 'it' in the passage 'strive against them with it' in the last verse designating the one contained in 'repeatedly swapped it' earlier, it is being implied that there too it refers only to the Qur'an. Here again it can be noticed as to how similar and mutually interpreting are the current statements of 'Indeed, we have swapped it amongst them repeatedly that they may receive admonition; yet most people disbelieved it' and 'Whenever a Fresh Reminder has come to them from the compassionate Lord, they have always turned aside from it' and 'Whenever a Sign from among the Signs of their Lord has come to them,



they have always turned aside from it' contained in statement nos. 97 and 99 respectively. Besides, the current statement of the repeated swapping of the Qur'an further strengthens the declaration under statement no. 118 of all the different revelations of the Qur'an to be similar to each other.

132) ... We have sent down the Reminder unto you in order that you may explain to mankind what has been sent down unto them repeatedly and that they may reflect.<sup>233</sup>

Had the meaning deduced by the predecessor exegetes from the current verse been the truly intended one, then the statement would have directly been: 'we have sent down the Reminder unto you in order that you may explain it to mankind' and the subsequent passage of 'what has been sent down unto them repeatedly' wouldn't have been reiterated once again. Besides, notice the difference of expression that if the sending down of the Reminder upon the holy Prophet has been conveyed through *anzala*, that upon mankind is being expressed through *nazzala*. Similarly, the very meaningful use of the central attribute of 'Reminder' to represent the Qur'an here is also extremely significant too. Thus, all these facts clearly demonstrate that the present expression has intentionally been employed to convey the reality of the multiplicity of the revelations of the Qur'an upon the present mankind. That is to say that out of the many Qur'ans revealed upon the mankind, only the current one has been revealed to them through the holy Prophet. Moreover, 'Reminder' here further suggests that it is a reminder to the holy Prophet too in the same way as it is to mankind. We shall elaborate upon this aspect and the true standing of the holy Prophet in due course. The current passage of 'what has been sent down unto them repeatedly' and the previous 'swapped it amongst them repeatedly' become synonymous with each other, thus. Consider now the following three more statements which clearly depict the disbelievers' absolute lack of the capacity to belief and faith in the Qur'an all the time:

133) The disbelievers say, "We shall repose our faith neither in this Qur'an nor in the one earlier to it..."<sup>234</sup>

This statement is so clear and unambiguous in its import that it absolves us from any further clarification in this regard. We shall, thus, be content with

its literal translation alone. It should, however, be remembered at this point of time that the current saying of the disbelievers is the one that is self-evident from their state of affairs, rather than the one uttered by their mouths. When they have disbelieved in the Qur'an previously too on the lines of the present, and when that past has mysteriously been kept concealed from them, it is but natural that their current statement implies merely their state of affairs. This is the reason why the following information too is being given concerning them:

134) Indeed, we know what they say does sadden you. Yet it is not you they are giving the lie to, but, *in fact*, it is the Signs of the Almighty the wicked people are belying. Cried lies were messengers before you too, yet they bore their belying and persecution patiently until our assistance reached them. And there is none who can alter the words of the Almighty. Assuredly, there has come to you the news of *those very* messengers.<sup>235</sup>

The holy Prophet is being consoled here in very clear terms that the present antagonism of the disbelievers isn't anything new. As a matter of fact, it is merely a solitary link in the long and continuous chain of their belying the divine Signs being sent to them from time to time. As such, this belying cannot be said to be his in any case, but it is, in reality, merely that of the divine Signs themselves. This is exactly the same message that has already been conveyed under statement nos. 99 and 129 through 'Whenever a Sign from among the Signs of their Lord has come to them, they have always turned aside from it' and 'The Signs are certainly with the Almighty. But what will make you realize that whenever they come they shall not believe' respectively. This is the reason why the patience of the messengers who had brought them those Signs earlier is subsequently being articulated through the passage 'Cried lies were messengers before you too, yet they bore their belying and persecution patiently.' And in order to disclose the true identity of the divine Signs brought to them by those earlier messengers, the holy Prophet is being informed at the end through 'Assuredly, there has come to you the news of *those very* messengers' that he has been given the very same book revealed upon those earlier prophets too. Remember, it is only to establish a complete correlation between these two latter passages that 'messengers' appearing as common noun in the former are being referred to as 'the messengers' in the



latter. Besides, 'news' and 'great news' are both the very attributes of the Qur'an itself, for instance:

134.1) Say, "It is a great news. You turn aside therefrom!"<sup>236</sup>

134.2) Concerning what are they questioning one another? Concerning the great news in which they are disputing? Never! They shall certainly come to know in while. Never again! They shall certainly come to know in while.<sup>237</sup>

A considerable number of exegetes have, on both these occasions, taken the 'great new' to mean the Qur'an. Besides, the present assertion of disclosing its true nature only after a while too is entirely consistent with the earlier assertions concerning the same. Thus, in the same manner as the apparent ambiguity under statement no. 110 concerning the multiple revelations of the Qur'an was finally removed through the statement 'Truly, it is among the scriptures of the ancients too,' the same strategy is being adhered to in the current statement too through 'Assuredly, there has come to you the news of the messengers.'

135) This is because the Almighty has sent down the truthful Book repeatedly, and those who dispute the Book are in far-away (i.e., ancient) animosity.<sup>238</sup>

In the same way as the previous statement reported the disbelievers' belying of the Qur'an to be an ancient one, the current statement is asserting the same reality through recourse to another expression by mentioning the repeated revelations of the Qur'an and considering them to be in far away opposition to it. Thus, the current statement is reinforcing all the previous statements concerning the disbelievers' constant opposition and belying of the Qur'an.

When the attitude of the disbelievers towards Qur'an is based upon such deep-seated and unrelenting hostility, then that of the believers themselves could be ascertained through the following 13 different statements:

136) Those to whom we have given the Book do recite it as it should be; it is only they who shall believe in it; and those who disbelieve in it are the losers themselves.<sup>239</sup>

The attributes of 'the Book' mentioned here befit only the Qur'an and its

bearers. And the pronoun 'it' appearing subsequently four times in this verse is compulsorily and flawlessly designating only the Qur'an and unraveling one of its most challenging expressions with remarkable ease. Thus, a very clear statement is being made here that only those people shall believe in the Qur'an and truly recite it in this life who have believed in it previously too. Remember, exactly the same message has been conveyed under statement no. 128 too through the expression 'a guidance to the god-fearing.' This is the reason why faith is subsequently being confined only in this group through the passage 'it is only they who shall believe in it' and faithlessness too is also being restricted to those who disbelieve in it through 'those who disbelieve in it are the lone losers.' This further strengthens our principle enacted earlier that howsoever and whatsoever lives the believers and the disbelievers are bestowed with, they shall remain committed to their respective desirable and undesirable attitudes. It is also evident from the current statement that the expressions 'those to whom we have given the Book' or 'the people of the Book' do not always indicate the bearers of the Torah and the Gospel — the Jews and the Christians. On the contrary, all those to whom this glorious Book has been given previously too do come under the scope of these expressions.

137) Indeed, we have kept conveying them the Word constantly that they may receive admonition. *However, each time* only those to whom we have given the Book previously too used to believe in it. And whenever it was recited to them, they used to say, "We do believe in it for it is the truth from our Lord. We had been obeying *it* earlier too."<sup>240</sup>

'Word' here, as established under statement no. 127 too, denotes the Qur'an. Another argument in support of this contention is the appearance of 'the Book' in the subsequent verse in apposition to it too. It can now be noticed as to how forcefully the current statement is strengthening and clarifying the brevity contained in the previous one. Thus, the first of the verses here 'Indeed, we have kept conveying them the Word constantly that they may receive admonition' is very clearly articulating that the Qur'an has time and again been revealed upon the current human race specifically for the admonition of its disbelieving classes. This statement can now particularly be compared to the one 'Indeed, we have repeatedly swapped it amongst them



that they may receive admonition' contained in statement no. 131 in order to figure out the stunning similarity of expression, both literal as well as meaningful, between them and their conveying of the same fact through two different sets of phrases. Besides, the current expression is also comparable to those of 'Whenever a Fresh Reminder has come to them from the compassionate *Lord*, they have always turned aside from it' and 'Whenever a Sign from among the Signs of their Lord has come to them, they have always turned aside from it' mentioned under statement nos. 97-99. This is why the current statement is further being strengthened through the subsequent passage 'only those to whom we have given the Book previously too used to believe in it,' with the extremely significant addition in it of 'previously too' unlike in the preceding statement, that even though the Book was constantly conveyed to the humanity as a whole for their own admonition, yet only those of the people believed in it each time who had reposed their faith in it earlier too. Remember, the current phrase 'those to whom we have given the Book' has also appeared on another seven occasions in the Qur'an, but the present one is the only place wherein it is accompanied by this addition. Hence, this addition is expressly conveying that the Book was merely one, and that only those who had been bestowed with it previously too used to believe in it subsequently. Thus, the initial two verses of the current statement are adequately explaining the brevity contained in 'Those to whom we have given the Book do recite it as it should be' of the previous statement. Moreover, the last verse of the current statement "And whenever it was recited to them, they used to say, 'We do believe in it for it is the truth from our Lord. We had been obeying *it* earlier too'" is further reinforcing this contention by depicting the attitude of the believers towards the Book that whenever it was recited to them the reality of their age-old association with it latent in their subconscious mind used to be awakened and they used to come to believe in it by affirming its truthful nature through their own state of affairs.

Just observe at this point in time the amazing literal resemblance between the statements of 'We do believe in it for it is the truth from our Lord. We had been obeying *it* earlier too' in the current statement concerning the believers and 'We shall repose our faith neither in this Qur'an nor in the one earlier to it' contained in statement no. 133 in relation to the disbelievers. This similarity of expression once again affirms the uniformity of their denotation.

138) Say, "Who is the greatest in testimony?" Say, "The Almighty is the witness between me and you, and this Qur'an has been revealed to me that I may warn you thereby and whomsoever it may reach. Do you testify that there are other gods besides the Almighty?" Say, "I do not testify." Say, "Indeed, he is the only God, and I am absolved of the partners you associate with him." Those to whom we have given the Book *previously too* do recognize it as they recognize their sons; yet those who have already inflicted loss upon their souls shall not come to believe. And who could be more wicked than the one who fabricates lies against the Almighty or belies his Signs? Surely the wicked shall not prosper.<sup>241</sup>

This entire statement has been constructed in an extremely cohesive fashion. In the very first verse here, the phrase 'this Qur'an' is, thus, distinguishing the present Qur'an from the rest of them. This is the reason why it is subsequently being affirmed through 'Those to whom we have given the Book' that the people to whom 'that' Qur'an has been given previously they do recognize the present Qur'an in the same way they recognize their own children. In this manner, the pronoun 'it' in the phrase 'recognize it' literally and compulsorily designates 'the Book' immediately preceding it. Besides, the subsequent phrase 'those who have already inflicted loss upon their souls shall not come to believe' prophesies that those of whom who have already subjected their souls to loss in their earlier lives by disbelieving in it would not repose their faith in it in their current lives as well. Thus, the current statement is, contrary to the earlier ones, disclosing the respective attitudes of both the believers and disbelievers concerning the Qur'an simultaneously. And it is in order to suggest these constant denials of the Qur'an by the disbelievers, they are again being declared to be the beliers of the Signs of the Almighty through the passage 'And who could be more wicked than the one who fabricates lies against the Almighty or belies his Signs' in the last verse, which further strengthens our argument concerning the true import of 'the Signs' earlier. Remember, the statements contained under statement nos. 99 and 134 too belong to the same context in which the current verses have appeared in the Qur'an. Furthermore, in this very context, by propounding the philosophy of the continued gathering of man between the skies under statement no. 78, it has been asserted through the identical phrase of 'yet those who have already inflicted loss upon their souls shall not come to believe' that



the people who haven't reposed their faith in the divinity in their previous lives shall not come to believe in their subsequent lives as well.

139) Those to whom we have given the Book *previously too* do recognize it as they recognize their sons. Yet a section of them is concealing the Truth knowingly. The Truth is from your Lord; do not, then, be from among the doubters.<sup>242</sup>

It is evident from the current identical expression of 'Those to whom we have given the Book *previously too* do recognize it as they recognize their sons' that here too, on the lines of the previous statement, a statement is being made concerning the people of the current human race who had reposed their faith in the previous Qur'an. It is further supplemented here that there exists in this class of former believers a section which is deliberately covering up this truthful Book at present, and hasn't come to believe in it as yet. Remember, in the same way as the Qur'an has been reported to be the truthful Book earlier, 'the Truth' is also one of its attributes, as could be discerned from the following statement too:

139.1) They have belied the Truth when it has come to them. So the tales of what they have been mocking at would come to them in a while.<sup>243</sup>

It is, thus, evident from it that 'the Truth' has been used here in apposition to 'the Book' earlier. Furthermore, wherever in the Qur'an the current phrase 'the Truth is from your Lord' has been used, it always denotes only the present Book. This very well establishes from another perspective that a coherent discussion is being made all through the current statement concerning only the Qur'an, which if a group of people recognizes on the basis of their previous acquaintance with it, some other members of the same group conceal it deliberately. This is why the holy Prophet is being advised immediately through 'The Truth is from your Lord; do not, then, be from among the doubters' not to suspect in the veracity of the Book. Besides, he has also been counseled similarly through a relatively clearer expression on another occasion thus:

139.2) If you are in doubt of what we have revealed unto you, ask then those who had been reading the Book earlier to you. Indeed, there has come to you the Truth from your Lord; do not, then, be from among the

doubters.<sup>244</sup>

Thus, another significant argument in the form of 'the Truth' has been obtained both in the current as well as the previous statements in aid of the pronoun 'it' in the phrase 'do recognize it' designating 'the Book' in either of them. It is this peculiarity of the verses of the current statement which has made us to consider them to be deeply connected with their immediately subsequent verse dealt with under statement no. 90. Now, it is extremely clear that a fundamental objective behind the multiple creations of man discussed there is being articulated in the form of the multiple revelations of the Qur'an upon him here.

When both these statements have employed an uniform expression concerning the recognition of the Book by its previous believers of the present human race, a relevant question arises as to the reason behind the additional passage of 'Yet a section of them is concealing the Truth knowingly' in the current one and its true import. So, the guiding principle behind the multiple creations of man has been to provide and test him with an array of exceptionally diverse lives, thereby exhibiting before him the dazzling aspect of the divine justice and equity in order that the disbelievers should be left with absolutely no excuse on the Day of Judgment in support of their wrongdoing. It stems from this philosophy that a person who has inherited the faith naturally and effortlessly in one life should not be provided with that relatively soft mode of testing in his subsequent life as well, but he should earn it himself by taking birth in a disbelieving household and in an unfavorable environment. This exhaustive and well-entrenched divine strategy of providing every person with equitable and impartial opportunities of both the faith and the faithlessness is extremely reasonable too. Bringing into being a person in an already believing family and another into an unbelieving one and rewarding the former and punishing the latter may place question mark upon the divine equity itself, otherwise. The excellence of a believer should be such that he must rescue himself from the quagmire of all sorts of awkward situations, and the misfortune of a disbeliever should be such that he must slip back into them from all the favorable environs — a regular phenomenon that is quite evident during every period of time till date. So, how many a people are there who are meeting their end in the state of belief even after taking birth and growing



up in disbelieving families, and how many are there to whom quite the opposite holds good. In this manner, even if a believer is made the son, wife, or nephew of a disbeliever, those unfavorable environs shall not suit him for too long. Similarly, if a disbeliever is made the son, father, wife, or uncle of even a prophet, those benign surroundings shall not befit him too, and either of them shall migrate to their respective deserving and true abodes before their end could dawn upon them.

Hence, it is the same group of former believers of the current human race who had been given the Book previously too, but they are still concealing it knowingly and haven't reposed their faith in it as yet, are at issue in the current passage. That is, their familiarity with it is underlying in their subconscious, but because they are presently put up in a disbelieving and unfriendly environment and haven't succeeded in making it to the doorsteps of the faith, they haven't fully recognized it and are guilty of concealing it, thus. They are, however, bound to escape the confines of disbelief and enter the realm of faith one day and their previous acquaintance with the Qur'an too has to resurface in their memory some time in the future. Consider now the following verse which is conveying quite the same message in extremely clear terms:

140) There is none from among the people of the Book who shall not come to believe in it before his death, and on the Day of Judgment it shall be a witness to him.<sup>245</sup>

This verse is appearing right in between an organized talk concerning the Jews and the Christians and doesn't bear any relation to its context. We have witnessed quite a few of such marvelous Qur'anic usages earlier too. Besides, 'people of the Book' too cannot refer to the Jews and Christians as a whole here as each one of them isn't reposing his faith in accordance with the literal denotation of the verse, nor could the pronoun 'it' be made to designate, on the lines of the earlier exegetes, Prophet Jesus. Had the latter been the case, it would give rise to the pertinent question as to what could be the utility of all the Jews and the Christians, particularly after the advent of Islam, reposing their faith in Prophet Jesus, rather than the holy Prophet himself? And where is it in our observation after all? It cannot even be construed, as the predecessors figuratively did, that this could be at the time of their death, as the reposal of one's faith, which is being so admired here, isn't at all valid

then, which is quite evident from the following statement:

140.1) Repentance is not for those who go on indulging in evil until when one of them is visited by death he says, "Indeed now I repent."<sup>246</sup>

It is, thus, quite evident that the pronoun 'it' in the phrase 'believe in it' is, on the lines of all the previous four statements, literally and compulsorily designating only 'the Book' to make a remarkable prediction that each and every one of the previous believers of the Qur'an present in the disbelieving classes of the current human race would definitely come to repose his faith in it before his death in his ongoing life too. As such, the phrases 'the people of the Book' and 'those to whom we had given the Book previously too' come to denote the same meaning. And, hence, all these five consecutive statements belong to the same group and strengthen each other. We shall deal with the succeeding verses of the current statement in due course, which shall illuminate this reality even further.

141) ... We have revealed it repeatedly. Say, "Whether you believe in it or not, those who have been given the Knowledge previously too, when it is recited to them, do fall down upon their faces prostrating."<sup>247</sup>

It is quite evident from this well-structured statement that after conveying the multiplicity of the revelations of the Qur'an in the first verse, the attitude of its former believers present in the current human race is being emphasized in the subsequent one. This is the reason why it is, on the very lines of the expression 'those to whom we had given the Book previously too used to believe in it' mentioned under statement no. 137, here too, with the meaningful addition of 'previously too' immediately after 'those who have been given the Knowledge,' the object of 'recited' is being considered to be 'the Knowledge' itself. In the other words, the very Knowledge given to the people previously is also being recited to them currently too. This suggests that Knowledge is also an attribute of the Qur'an, in whose apposition it has deliberately been advanced here. We have witnessed such amazing instances of the simultaneous usage of two different words, one literal and the other figurative, to denote the same meaning previously too. Besides, some of the predecessor exegetes too have taken it to mean the Qur'an itself. Particularly, Razi's *al-Tafseer al-Kabeer* should be referred under the chapter 10:93 in this regard.



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Hence, it is the same group of former believers of the current human race who had been given the Book previously too, but they are still concealing it knowingly and haven't reposed their faith in it as yet, are at issue in the current passage. That is, their familiarity with it is underlying in their subconscious, but because they are presently put up in a disbelieving and unfriendly environment and haven't succeeded in making it to the doorsteps of the faith, they haven't fully recognized it and are guilty of concealing it, thus. They are, however, bound to escape the confines of disbelief and enter the realm of faith one day and their previous acquaintance with the Qur'an too has to resurface in their memory some time in the future. Consider now the following verse which is conveying quite the same message in extremely clear terms:

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It is, thus, being declared through these verses that whether the disbelievers believe in the Qur'an or not, all those to whom it has previously been given and they have reposed their faith in it then shall come to believe in it in their present lives too, and when it is recited to them they would fall down upon their faces prostrating before the Almighty. Remember, on earlier occasions too, after conveying the reality of the multiple revelations of the Qur'an under statement nos. 116.1 and 118, similar statements have been made through 'Do you then marvel at this discourse? Keep laughing and do not weep? Negligent? So prostrate before the Almighty and worship him' and 'with which shiver the skins of those who fear their Lord; then their skins and hearts soften to the divine remembrance' respectively. This suggests that the current statement is interpreting and further reinforcing all the previous five of them as well. The following six more of them further strengthen our present contention concerning 'Knowledge:'

142) And that those who have been given the Knowledge *previously too* may know that it is the Truth from your Lord and believe in it, and their hearts may submit to it. Indeed, the Almighty guides the believers to a straight path. *But*, the disbelievers shall always be in doubt with regard to it until the Doomsday overtakes them suddenly or the punishment of a barren day befalls them. To the Almighty shall belong the kingdom that day, and he shall judge between them. So those who believed and performed righteous deeds shall be in the gardens of delight. And for those who disbelieved and belied our Signs shall be a disgraceful punishment.<sup>248</sup>

Here too the pronoun 'it' in the phrase 'that it is' is compulsorily designating 'Knowledge.' And so does the same pronoun appearing subsequently on three more occasions too. Thus, the phrase 'And that those who have been given the Knowledge may know that it is the Truth from your Lord' literally suggests that those people of the present human race who have been given the Knowledge previously too know that it is the truth. This is the reason why their inner feeling consequent to the disclosure of this great reality is being expressed through 'they may believe in it, and their hearts may submit to it.' Remember, under statement no. 118 too, after the statement of the multiple revelations of the Qur'an, a similar attitude of the believers has been described through 'with which shiver the skins of those who fear their Lord; then their skins and hearts soften to the divine remembrance.' This once again

literally establishes that 'Knowledge' denotes the Qur'an, and 'those who have been given the Knowledge' are its previous believers of the current human race. And this is the reason why a prediction is being made through the subsequent phrase of 'the Almighty guides the believers to a straight path' that all those previous believers would be bestowed with belief in their present lives too, which resolves with remarkable ease the long-standing puzzle faced by the predecessors as to what could be the true import of the Almighty guiding the already guided people. On the contrary, the subsequent verse is making another prediction concerning the previous disbelievers as well that they too shall believe neither in this life (until the punishment of a barren day) nor in their subsequent lives (until the Doomsday overtakes them). Remember, we have discussed at considerable length in the third chapter to show that 'the punishment of the barren day' is the impending punishment that shall exterminate the present humanity from the Earth. Thus, the principle enacted earlier concerning the persistence of both the believers and the disbelievers in their respective behavior gets further reinforced. And it is in order to emphasize this aspect still further that this repeated belying of the Qur'an by the disbelievers is again being considered to be that of the divine Signs themselves in the last verse. Besides, in this very context appears the statement of the multiple creations of man through the passage 'It is he who has brought you back to life, thereafter he will cause you to die, and thereafter he will bring you back to life again; man is, indeed, ungrateful,' which has already been dealt with at length under statement no. 53. This interpretation amply establishes that the verses of the current statement are independent in their denotation and bear absolutely no relationship with their immediately preceding ones.

143) The Truth is from your Lord; do not, then, be from among the doubters. So, those who argue with you even after the Knowledge has come to you, tell them...<sup>249</sup>

These verses are the continuation of the one mentioned under statement no. 122. After considering the present Qur'an to be merely one of the many Signs or the offshoots that have emanated from the Parent Book there, the same is being regarded here as 'the Truth,' and the holy Prophet is asked not to suspect its authenticity. Remember, under statement no. 139 too the



identical passage of 'The Truth is from your Lord; do not, then, be from among the doubters' had been repeated after the mention of the previous revelations of the Qur'an to deem itself to be 'the Truth.' Besides, another instance of this usage is appearing in the next statement as well. And it is evident from it that this Truth itself is metaphorically being referred to as 'the Knowledge' subsequently. In this manner, three different attributes of the Qur'an, 'Sign,' 'the Truth,' and 'the Knowledge,' are simultaneously being mentioned in succession in these verses.

144) Shall I seek a judge other than the Almighty when he has revealed to you the Book in detail? Whereas, those to whom we have given the Book *previously too* do know that it has repeatedly been revealed by your Lord in truth; do not, then, be from among the doubters.<sup>250</sup>

These are the succeeding verses of those contained in statement no. 129. It is very much obvious that after the statement of the previous multiple revelations of the Qur'an in the form of different Signs upon the current human race and its continued and unrelenting belying by the disbelievers there, the attitude of the believers towards it is being described here. 'The Book' on both the occasions in the current statement is, thus, denoting only the Qur'an, and the pronoun 'it' in the phrase 'that it has' is compulsorily designating itself. It is in this backdrop that the holy Prophet is being asked not to doubt the authenticity of the revelation of the Qur'an even if the disbelievers reject it, as those of the people to whom it has also been given previously too definitely know its truthful character. And it is for this reason that these previous believers are regarded in the following statement as 'the Knowledgeable' who testify the unity and oneness of God:

144.1) The Almighty testifies, and so do the angels and the Knowledgeable, that there is no god other than himself, the upholder of justice. There is no god other than the Mighty, the Wise.<sup>251</sup>

And this is why they are also being deemed to be those realizing the truthful nature of the Qur'an too:

144.2) Those who have been given the Knowledge do realize that the one sent down upon you from your Lord is the truth, and guides to the path of the Mighty, the Praiseworthy.<sup>252</sup>

Thus, the current passage 'Those who have been given the Knowledge do realize that the one sent down upon you from your Lord is the truth' and the previous 'those to whom we have given the Book do know that it has repeatedly been revealed by your Lord in truth' are conveying the very same message with recourse to two different sets of expressions.

It is now evident from the usage in such diverse settings of the phrase 'those to whom we have given the Book' earlier that it always denotes the members of the current human race, whether the Jews, the Christians, or others, who had reposed their faith in the Qur'an in their previous lives as well. All those who continued to believe in it right from the inception of Islam till the extinction of the present humanity do fall under the sphere of this distinctive phrase. On the contrary, 'people of the Book' and 'those who were given the Book' are the general phrases that at times imply those of the people on whom the Qur'an has been revealed previously too, whether they have believed in it or haven't believed in it, and at times signifies the bearers of the Torah and the Gospel, the Jews and the Christians. So, the true import of the latter type of phrases could be determined from their individual contexts alone.

Besides, our foregoing discussion is further establishing another reality that the phrases 'those who have been given the Knowledge' and 'the Knowledgeable' too convey the same meaning as does 'those to whom we have given the Book.' Furthermore, 'the Knowledge' in absolute terms holds another significant insight for us similar to 'the Reminder' earlier. So, wherever it has metaphorically been used to denote the Qur'an, it signifies its multiple revelations upon merely the present man. 'The Knowledge has come to you,' for instance, implies that there has come to you in the form of the present Qur'an that very Knowledge which enlightens you of your acquaintance with it previously too. The following are a few more instances from the same genre of statements:

145) ... And if you follow their desires even after the Knowledge has come to you, then you shall neither have any friend nor helper against the Almighty.<sup>253</sup>

This verse immediately precedes the one contained in statement no. 136. Besides, from the verse preceding the current one too, the entire talk is being



carried out in the context of the Qur'an alone through the passage 'Surely we have sent you with the Truth.' Thus, it is only after conveying the previous revelation of the Qur'an upon the present man through the term 'the Knowledge' in the current verse, and in order to reinforce this contention even further, it is being affirmed in the subsequent verse, through 'Those to whom we have given the Book *previously too* do recite it as it should be,' that only those of the people who have reposed their faith in it previously too would believe in its current revelation. Remember, in the same way as the Qur'an was simultaneously attributed with the characteristics of 'Sign,' 'the Truth,' and 'the Knowledge,' under statement no. 143, here too 'the Truth,' 'the Knowledge,' and 'the Book' have been advanced in a marvelous fashion. Thus, our argument contained under statement no. 136 receives further emphasis.

146) ... And if you follow their desires even after the Knowledge has come to you, then you will surely be among the transgressors.<sup>254</sup>

This verse too immediately precedes those mentioned in statement no. 139. Thus, it is only after giving the lesson of the previous revelation of the Qur'an upon the present man in the current verse through the use of a phrase exactly similar to the previous statement it is being asserted in the subsequent verses that those of the people who have been given it previously too recognize it in the same manner they recognize their own sons.

147) Those to whom we have given the Book *previously too* rejoice at what has been sent down to you, while a few of the groups do not recognize some of it. Say, "I have only been ordained to worship the Almighty, and not to associate anyone with him. To him I call, and to him is my return." In the same way *as it has been revealed previously too in other languages*, we have sent it down as an Arabic commandment *presently*. And if you follow their desires even after the Knowledge has come to you, then you shall not have any friend or protector against the Almighty. We did send many messengers before you and provide them with wives and children, but it was not for any of them to come up with a Sign except by the wish of the Almighty. For each period is a Book. The Almighty erases whatever he wishes and retains *whatever he wishes*, for he has with him the Parent Book.<sup>255</sup>

When each of the different human races given existence across the length and breadth of the universe are, under the philosophy of the continued gathering of man between the skies, being dispersed in different earths on a continuous basis for their subsequent lives, it could rightly be inferred from it that the present terrestrial human race too is the combination of many other previously extinct partial races brought in from the other parts of the universe. It could now literally be ascertained from the current statement that it is these very partial races that are being referred to here as 'groups.' Besides, it is also very likely in the light of our foregoing discussion that the Qur'ans they were given in their previous lives might vary from the current one slightly, and, as a result, those distinctive parts of the present Qur'an are entirely new to them. It is, thus, quite evident from the current statement that those members of the present human race who have already believed in the Qur'an previously are rejoicing in its revelation in their current lives too. There are, however, a few others who, as some of its passages are entirely new to them, do not recognize those specific parts. Probably, this might be the reason that they haven't succeeded as yet in reposing their faith in it, which has been articulated through 'Yet a section of them is concealing the Truth knowingly' under statement no. 139. This is the reason why these previous revelations of the Qur'an are subsequently being reiterated once again through the passage 'In the same way, we have sent it down as an Arabic commandment' that in the same way as it has been revealed in the other languages of the universe previously too it is presently being revealed in Arabic as well. Remember, the comparative phrase 'In the same way' (*kaza 'lika* in Arabic) too, wherein the phrase likened to has very significantly been omitted, is one of the most challenging terms that have as yet evaded any worthwhile interpretation concerning their true import. And this is the reason why the Qur'an is metaphorically being referred to as 'the Knowledge' subsequently and the holy Prophet is being advised not to follow the aspirations of the disbelievers as they have already disbelieved in it previously, and that they shall never repose their faith in it in their present lives too. Thus, 'the Knowledge' singularly conveys the existence of the former believers of the Qur'an in the current human race. And through the subsequent passage 'but it was not for any of the messengers to come up with a Sign except by the wish of the Almighty. For each period is a Book' all these previous Qur'ans are once



again being referred to as the Signs that are being revealed at regular intervals as a separate Book for every epoch. Besides, reinforcing the earlier statement of 'while a few of the groups do not recognize some of it,' the concluding passage 'The Almighty erases whatever he wishes and retains *whatever he wishes*, for he has with him the Parent Book' further suggests that the fountainhead of all these Qur'ans is with the Almighty, which is revealed upon the concerned people only after undergoing the necessary changes in it according to their own requirements. Remember, we have already dealt with the last two of these passages in detail under statement no. 118.3. Thus, the current statement very clearly conveys the dual philosophy of the multiple creations of man and the repeated revelations of the Qur'an in an extremely coherent fashion.

Though the basic objective behind the entire scheme of the multiple creations of man and the repeated revelations of the Qur'an upon him is the provision of abundant opportunities of reformation and repentance for the disbelievers, yet it is quite evident from the persistent belief and disbelief reposed in it by the believers and the disbelievers respectively as obtained continuously through the previous 16 statements that it hasn't been revealed upon the disbelievers any time, and that it is always given to the believers alone. The following verse is just highlighting this aspect in extremely clear terms:

148) The Almighty did confer a great favor on the believers when he raised up a messenger to them from among themselves, who recites to them his Signs, purifies them, and teaches them the Book and the wisdom, while they were in obvious error earlier.<sup>256</sup>

This statement is very clear in its import that the holy Prophet has been sent merely in the class of believers and for their reformation alone. It is also evident from this assertion that the believers did exist from even before the prophethood of the holy Prophet, in whom he has been sent subsequently. Thus, they are the ones who continue to exist as such from even their previous lives. And the holy Prophet too belongs to this very tribe. This was the reason why the Qur'an too was considered under statement no. 128 through 'a guidance to the god-fearing' to be a guide for the previous believers alone.

It is evident from our foregoing discussion in this chapter that man

basically enjoys two different capacities: one concerning his multiple lives all through the universe, and the other relating to his current terrestrial one alone. The Qur'an addresses him individually in both of these capacities too. All the previously mentioned statements concern only the former category, whereas the last phrase 'while they were in obvious error earlier' in the current statement pertains to the latter. The following are a few more from the same type:

148.1) ... You were all from among the erroneous earlier.<sup>257</sup>

148.2) ... You were from among the unawares earlier.<sup>258</sup>

Obviously, even though the believers continued to be endowed with the divine guidance in all of their previous lives, nevertheless they used to remain in error and ignorance until its ultimate receipt each time. It should particularly be born in mind here that the last of these statements pertains to the holy Prophet himself.

When the fundamental aim behind the multiple creations of man itself is the provision of assorted lives to both the believers and the disbelievers alike for the purpose of their testing, an inference could rightly be drawn from it that the Book repeatedly given to them in those lives cannot always form the legacy of a particular nation or a group of people. It should, on the contrary, be inherited by an altogether new people each time. Thus, if the Arabs are its bearers and preachers presently, it could be others previously, and still others subsequently. Consider now the following statement which is making precisely the same statement in extremely clear terms:

149) He has ordained for you as Religion that which he had commanded to Noah, that which we had revealed to yourself, that which we had commanded to Abraham, Moses, and Jesus: 'establish the Religion and do not get divided in it.' Unbearable for the polytheists is that which you are calling them to. The Almighty chooses to himself whomsoever he pleases and guides to himself whosoever turns in repentance. It is only after the Knowledge has reached them that they have got divided due to the rivalry among themselves. Had not a word from your Lord gone forth till an appointed term, the matter would have certainly been decided between them. Indeed, those after whom (i.e., after their respective turns) the Book has been caused to be inherited by *others* are themselves in suspicious



doubt concerning it.<sup>259</sup>

These verses are bound together with all the previous 12 verses of the current chapter of the Qur'an under a single philosophy. We shall comprehensively deal with this context after a while. It is now very much obvious from the general phrase 'He has ordained for you as Religion' here that humanity as a whole is being addressed through it to be implored again through 'do not get divided in it' so as not to create divisions in the Religion. Whereas, the subsequent verse is conveying the very division they have created thereafter between themselves through the use of a similar phrase 'they have got divided.' Thus, 'the Knowledge' in the context of the entire humanity discloses that the Qur'an has been revealed upon each and every of its members previously too. As such, the passage 'It is only after the Knowledge has reached them that they have got divided due to the rivalry among themselves' reveals that when the Qur'an came to the present human race once again in line with the past, they got themselves divided in different sects; if one of them believed in it, the others belied it due to their rivalry with the former. And in order to reinforce this contention even further that an extremely far-reaching statement of 'Indeed, those after whom the Book has been caused to be inherited by others are themselves in suspicious doubt concerning it' is once again being made subsequently concerning these very people who have created divisions among themselves with regard to the Qur'an that they are the ones after whom it has been given to the others, and that they are themselves ignorant of their own previous Book. That is, they haven't only been given the Qur'an previously, but have also been made its inheritors and bearers too! The Book, thus, is one and the same. And both of its previous and the present inheritors very much exist currently too. The difference, however, is merely that its legacy has been transformed. If the many different nations of the current human race have inherited it one after the other previously, it is the turn of the Arabs now.

When those reposing their faith in the present Qur'an come from each and every nation of the current human race existing on the face of the Earth, it can rightly be inferred from it that all these nations too must have been its inheritors and bearers formerly. The fact, however, needs to be remembered is that all these previous bearers of the Qur'an are not at all in doubt

concerning it. But, according to statement no. 140, a section of the believers present in them has already believed in it, and the remainder of this section shall repose their faith in it anytime before their respective deaths. Those who are suspecting its veracity are only the disbelieving classes present in them. Thus, the phrase 'they have got divided' could also be understood in the context of these former bearers of the Qur'an that consequent to the arrival of this glorious Book, they themselves got divided into two sections: if one of them reposed its faith in it right away and also continues to do it even today, the other remained persistent in its denial, belying as before. The following two more statements strengthen this contention even further:

150) The religion with the Almighty is Islam. It is only after this Knowledge has reached them that those who have been given the Book *previously too* have differed due to rivalry among themselves. Those who deny the Signs of the Almighty, he is swift in calling to account.<sup>260</sup>

This statement is in total agreement with the previous one, both literally as well as meaningfully. On each of these occasions virtually the same claim is being made that it is only after the advent of the Qur'an repeatedly for another time as 'Knowledge' that those who have been given it previously too have got divided due to the rivalry among themselves. If the true identity of those who are being indicated through the phrase 'they have got divided' in the previous statement has been disclosed through 'those after whom the Book has been caused to be inherited' after a while, the statement 'those who have been given the Book *previously too*' has been advanced directly in the current statement to refer to them. This makes our argument in the previous statement even more compelling. And it is only to imply these numerous Qur'ans and their repeated denials by the disbelievers that the phrase 'Those who deny the Signs of the Almighty' is being reiterated once again.

Consider now the following two more statements which quite stunningly convey the very message advanced with recourse to 'the Knowledge' continuously for the previous two statements is also being put across through 'the Clear Sign' as well, which strengthen our contention under statement no. 115 that the latter is one of the attributes the Qur'an itself:

151) It is only after the Clear Sign has reached them that those who have been given the Book *previously too* have got divided.<sup>261</sup>



doubt concerning it.<sup>259</sup>

These verses are bound together with all the previous 12 verses of the current chapter of the Qur'an under a single philosophy. We shall comprehensively deal with this context after a while. It is now very much obvious from the general phrase 'He has ordained for you as Religion' here that humanity as a whole is being addressed through it to be implored again through 'do not get divided in it' so as not to create divisions in the Religion. Whereas, the subsequent verse is conveying the very division they have created thereafter between themselves through the use of a similar phrase 'they have got divided.' Thus, 'the Knowledge' in the context of the entire humanity discloses that the Qur'an has been revealed upon each and every of its members previously too. As such, the passage 'It is only after the Knowledge has reached them that they have got divided due to the rivalry among themselves' reveals that when the Qur'an came to the present human race once again in line with the past, they got themselves divided in different sects; if one of them believed in it, the others belied it due to their rivalry with the former. And in order to reinforce this contention even further that an extremely far-reaching statement of 'Indeed, those after whom the Book has been caused to be inherited *by others* are themselves in suspicious doubt concerning it' is once again being made subsequently concerning these very people who have created divisions among themselves with regard to the Qur'an that they are the ones after whom it has been given to the others, and that they are themselves ignorant of their own previous Book. That is, they haven't only been given the Qur'an previously, but have also been made its inheritors and bearers too! The Book, thus, is one and the same. And both of its previous and the present inheritors very much exist currently too. The difference, however, is merely that its legacy has been transformed. If the many different nations of the current human race have inherited it one after the other previously, it is the turn of the Arabs now.

When those reposing their faith in the present Qur'an come from each and every nation of the current human race existing on the face of the Earth, it can rightly be inferred from it that all these nations too must have been its inheritors and bearers formerly. The fact, however, needs to be remembered is that all these previous bearers of the Qur'an are not at all in doubt

concerning it. But, according to statement no. 140, a section of the believers present in them has already believed in it, and the remainder of this section shall repose their faith in it anytime before their respective deaths. Those who are suspecting its veracity are only the disbelieving classes present in them. Thus, the phrase 'they have got divided' could also be understood in the context of these former bearers of the Qur'an that consequent to the arrival of this glorious Book, they themselves got divided into two sections: if one of them reposed its faith in it right away and also continues to do it even today, the other remained persistent in its denial, belying as before. The following two more statements strengthen this contention even further:

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concerning it. But, according to statement no. 140, a section of the believers present in them has already believed in it, and the remainder of this section shall repose their faith in it anytime before their respective deaths. Those who are suspecting its veracity are only the disbelieving classes present in them. Thus, the phrase 'they have got divided' could also be understood in the context of these former bearers of the Qur'an that consequent to the arrival of this glorious Book, they themselves got divided into two sections: if one of them reposed its faith in it right away and also continues to do it even today, the other remained persistent in its denial, belying as before. The following two more statements strengthen this contention even further:

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Consider now the following two more statements which quite stunningly convey the very message advanced with recourse to 'the Knowledge' continuously for the previous two statements is also being put across through 'the Clear Sign' as well, which strengthen our contention under statement no. 115 that the latter is one of the attributes the Qur'an itself:

151) It is only after the Clear Sign has reached them that those who have been given the Book *previously too* have got divided.<sup>261</sup>



151.1) Do not be like those who got divided and differed even after many Clear Signs have reached them.<sup>262</sup>

Now when the previous revelations of the comparatively superior Qur'an are also being established upon the different nations of the current human race apart from the Torah, the Gospel, the Psalms etc. given to them in their current lives, the revelation of the relatively inferior books upon the present bearers and inheritors of the Qur'an in their past lives too gets substantiated with the same reasoning. This elaborate strategy becomes all the more necessary as whenever an earth is bestowed with life and a new human race is subsequently given existence and made to flourish on it, the latter, by remaining civilizationally and culturally underdeveloped for a considerably longer period of time, becomes gradually proficient in exploring the different phenomena of nature and ascertaining the signs of providence itself only in the final stages of its existence similar to our own selves. And all our foregoing discussion has quite reasonably established that it is only the Qur'an that qualifies to be scientific and universal and marvelous in nature, contrary to the other revealed scriptures that were only provisional and regional, and essentially sermonizing. It stems from this logic that unless and until a human race gets to the threshold of enlightenment and scientific and technological development only those of the books are occasionally given to its different nations that are essentially provisional and regional in character, before the ultimate revelation of the Qur'an to act as the final argument of divinity upon the humanity as a whole. Thus, when the current bearers of the Qur'an have been made to be born in the contemporary intellectual and scientific age of the present human race to inherit this marvelous and enlightened book, the philosophy of the multiple creations of man based upon the concept of the provision of equal opportunities to all demands that each person should also be provided with such intellectual and faith-enhancing occasions. Those who have been deprived of it in this life should be provided with subsequently, or it may be that they might already have been bestowed with it previously, and might again be presented with it in a totally different context later on too. The following statement is articulating quite the same point in very clear terms:

152) Follow the fairest of what has been sent down to you from your Lord

before the punishment strikes you all of a sudden and in your own inattention. Lest a soul should say *on the Day of Judgment*, "Alas for me, in that I neglected *my duty* towards the Almighty, and indulged myself only in mocking," or say, "If only the Almighty had guided me, I would definitely have been from among the god-fearing," or say on seeing the punishment, "I wish I am returned again so that I could be among the well-doers." *He would then be replied*, "Yes indeed! There had come to you many of my Signs, yet you belied them, prided yourselves, and continued to disbelieve."<sup>263</sup>

It is very much evident from the phrase "say, 'O my servants who have transgressed against their souls!'" just a couple of verses earlier to the current statement that the same general address initiated there is still being continued here too. It should also be born in mind at this stage that verse no. 23 of this chapter, which has also been discussed under statement no. 118 too, has declared the Qur'an itself to be the fairest discourse. Now, in view both of this particular setting and all our discussion previously, the phrase 'the fairest of what has been sent down to you from your Lord' denotes the Qur'an itself. Many of the predecessor exegetes too have deduced the same meaning. Besides, it is also apparent from this amazing phrase that the Qur'an is merely one and the fairest of all that have been sent down upon the present human race. In other words, it is only after revealing the other relatively inferior books that the most superior Qur'an has been sent down to them towards the end. So far as the other nations of the world are concerned, this statement is quite obvious as they have earlier been given other books too, which they follow even today, before being given the Qur'an as well. However, the significant fact that is being disclosed through it is that the present bearers of the Qur'an too have been given many inferior books in their earlier lives before being give the Qur'an itself in current one! Thus, it is very much clear that if the Arabs have been made to inherit the Qur'an, and they are bearing and preaching it to the bearers of the other inferior books here, quite the contrary must have been the case at a different location earlier. And this is the precise reality that has already been expressed in a different phraseology through 'Indeed, those after whom the Book has been caused to be inherited *by others* are themselves in suspicious doubt concerning it' under statement no. 149.



Nevertheless, the phrase 'the fairest of what has been sent down to you' cannot be taken to mean that it has been revealed upon us for the first time, as a book when revealed repeatedly, none of its revelations could be construed to be superior to the other. Thus, the superiority concerns only in relation to the inferior ones, which is being articulated here. Then, the subsequent three verses are articulating the logic behind this unparalleled and deep-rooted strategy of the multiple creations of man, the repeated revelations of the divine Books, and the constant changing of the bearers and preachers of these Books that none can come out with an excuse on the Day of Judgment that he hadn't been provided with any or repeated opportunities to belief and faith or demand that he be returned to the world again and given another chance to reform himself. And it is only on this desire that he is being responded with 'Yes indeed! There had come to you many of my Signs, yet you belied them' to convey that when he has already been given so many lives and provided with one or the other revealed Books in each of them without even he demanding them and he hasn't reposed his faith in them even once, then what can be expected of him in future. This establishes that the initial phrase 'the fairest of what has been sent down to you' is further being emphasized with 'Yes indeed! There had come to you many of my Signs' in the end.

Besides, another significant fact baring itself here is that in the same way as a 'yah denotes any of the Signs or the offshoots of the Parent Book, it also represents any of the other revealed Books too. Hence, all the Books revealed upon us in all of our worldly lives are being expressed through the phrase 'Yes indeed! There had come to you many of my Signs.'

When the Qur'an has previously been revealed upon many different nations of the current human race, it particularly mentions one of them that had been made to inherit it immediately preceding the current Arabs. It initiates the discussion concerning it thus:

153) Have you not seen those who have been given a share in *the inheritance of the Book* are being called to the Book of the Almighty *once again*, that it might decide between them, then too a section of them is turning aside, paying no attention?<sup>264</sup>

The current phrase 'those who have been given a share in the Book' has appeared on the following two more occasions too:

153.1) Have you not seen those who have been given a share in *the inheritance of the Book* traffic in error, and wish that you too go astray?<sup>265</sup>

153.2) Have you not seen those who have been given a share in *the inheritance of the Book* believe in demons and idols, and say concerning the disbelievers, "These are the better guided as regards the way than those who believe?"<sup>266</sup>

When the same statement is being made over and over again at different places and with recourse to different expressions, there cannot be said to be any specific circumstance of its revelation. Besides, it is also evident from the phrase 'are being called to the Book of the Almighty' in the verse under discussion that the book that deserves to be preached consequent to the advent of Islam cannot be anything other than the Qur'an itself. Thus, when 'the Book' is denoting the Qur'an here, then the requirement of a well-structured speech demands that the same Qur'an should be meant in the immediately preceding phrase of 'those who have been given a share in the Book' too. Now, it is a known fact that none from the current human race has been given a share or portion of the present Qur'an. If at all they have been given anything in the past, it was a complete Qur'an. Thus, the true import of the phrase 'those who have been given a share in the Book' can only be 'those who have been given a share in *the inheritance of the Book*.' This is why it is immediately wondered through 'then too a section of them is turning aside, paying no attention' that how can they show their back to their own book. Similarly, after considering the same people to be its former inheritors in both of these latter verses, an immense astonishment is being expressed in the former of them on their desire of the current believers too falling into error, and on their consideration of the Arab pagans to be more guided than the believers themselves in the latter. Thus, both according to the context of all these three statements and the description of their very attributes, can these people be anyone other the Children of Israel themselves! And if the following statement occurring right in the middle of these two latter verses is also considered, wherein this very nation has been addressed directly, this notion gets further emphasized:

154) O you who have been given the Book *previously too*, believe in what we have revealed repeatedly confirming that which had been with you too,



before we erase faces, that is, turn them backwards, or curse them as we have cursed the people of the Sabbath. The decree of the Almighty comes to pass always.<sup>267</sup>

It is very much evident from the mode of expression employed here that exactly the same people who have been described merely three verses earlier as 'those who have been given a share in the inheritance of the Book' are now, in a stunning change of expression, directly being addressed through 'O you who have been given the Book *previously too*.' Thus, an extremely compelling argument in support of 'a share in the Book' denoting an entire Book has been obtained directly from its context itself. And it is only in order to reinforce this contention even further that after mentioning its repeated revelation once again, it is also being stated through 'confirming that which had been with you too' that it is the very book that had been given in their inheritance some time in the past too. It can be pondered as to how variously the previous phrase 'those who have been given a share in the Book' is being interpreted and its true meaning emphasized repeatedly thrice here through 'O you who have been given the Book,' 'revealed repeatedly,' and 'confirming that which had been with you too,' which further strengthens all our arguments individually made concerning each of these phrases earlier. Thus, the Children of Israel are being informed here that in the same way as the inheritance of the Qur'an had been given to them in their previous lives, it has been transferred to another people today. The following six more statements reinforce this reality even further:

155) Recite the Book that has been sent down to you, and establish prayer; indeed prayer forbids indecency and dishonor. The remembrance of the Almighty is the greatest, and he knows whatever you do. Argue with the People of the Book, save for the wrongdoers among them, only in the fairer manner, and say, "We have reposed our faith in that which has been sent down to us and sent down to you too; our God and your God is one, and it is to him that we submit ourselves." Likewise, we have sent down the Book to you *too*. So those to whom we have given the Book *previously too* believe in it, and there are those from among these too who shall believe in it; it is only the disbelievers who deny our Signs. You were neither reading any book before this, nor were writing one with your hand, otherwise the followers of falsehood would have doubted. Rather, it is

itself Clear Signs in the breasts of those who have been given the Knowledge; it is only the wrongdoers who deny our Signs. They say, "Why have the signs not sent down upon him from his Lord?" Say, "The Signs are with the Almighty alone, and I am merely a plain warner." Doesn't it suffice them that we have sent down to you the Book that was being recited to them? Surely in that are a mercy and an admonition to a people who believe.<sup>268</sup>

It is evident from the phrase 'Recite the Book that has been sent down to you' that the present talk is being carried out in the context of only the Qur'an. And it is also clear from the subsequent phrase 'argue with the People of the Book' that the current address concerns the Jews and the Christians. So the statement 'We have reposed our faith in that which has been sent down to us and sent down to you too' in relation to them unequivocally conveys that the Book the Muslims believe in currently is the one that has already been given both to themselves and to the Jews and the Christians previously too. This is because the subject of both 'sent down to us' and 'sent down to you,' which is the relative pronoun 'that,' is common to either of them. In other words, the Book is one and the same, with merely its revelations being separated and multiple. And this is the reason why the thing being likened to through the subsequent phrase of 'Likewise, we have sent down the Book to you' has mysteriously been obscured to imply very eloquently that in the same way as the Qur'an had been given to the Arabs and the Jews and the Christians previously, it is being given again to the former through the holy Prophet currently too. Remember, through the passage 'we have sent down unto you the Reminder in order that you may explain to mankind what has been sent down unto them repeatedly' under statement no. 132 as well it has been conveyed that the Book revealed upon the holy Prophet currently has already been given to the present human race repeatedly in the past too. And it is in order to reinforce this contention once again that a general declaration is immediately being made through 'So those to whom we have given the Book believe in it' that all the members of the present human race who have reposed their faith in it previously would also believe in it presently too. Besides, as the present address is particularly with reference to the Jews and the Christians, the same prediction is being made exclusively concerning them through 'and from among these too there are those who shall believe in it.'



And it is only in order to imply all these revelations of the Qur'an, that the phrase 'it is only the disbelievers who deny our Signs' has also been advanced subsequently.

Besides, strengthening this argument still further, the basis for this consistency of the believers is once again being disclosed through 'Rather, it is itself Clear Signs in the breasts of those who have been given the Knowledge' that the Qur'an exists in the breasts and hearts of the believers in the form of Clear Signs always. That is, the number of its Clear Signs in their breasts is what the number of its revelations on them is. This is the reason why the Jews and the Christians are subsequently contradicted, on their demand of the revelation of divine signs, with 'Is it not sufficient for them that we have sent down to you the Book recited to them?' Remember, 'the Book' here, according to the Arabic syntax, is a proper noun, and 'being recited to them' is a verbal clause and appearing as its circumstantial phrase, which conveys the meaning of an adjective. Thus, they together unmistakably denote 'the Book that was being recited to them.' As such, the Jews and the Christians are being countered with this stunning reality whether they require any bigger sign or miracle than the current one wherein their own previous Book has now been revealed upon the holy Prophet too? Thus, the statements of 'we have sent down to you the Book that was being recited to them' and 'We have reposed our faith in that which has been sent down to us and sent down to you too' become mutually complimenting and interpreting one another. It can now be pondered as to how consistently and compellingly each and every phrase of the current statement is underlining all our contentions. We shall further deal with these verses very shortly with reference to their immediate context as well, which shall shed further light upon this spectacular divine phenomenon.

156) You shall surely be tested in your riches and in your lives, and you shall hear much from those who have been given the Book before you and those who indulge in idolatry that will hurt you...<sup>269</sup>

Just consider as to how obvious and consistent the current statement is with our ongoing discussion. So, the marvelous addition of 'before you' to the phrase 'those who have been given the Book' here clearly substantiates our contentions in all the previous statements in this regard, and unequivocally

cally conveys that the Book is merely one, which has been given to the People of the Book Israelites too prior to the Arabs themselves. Remember, under statement nos. 137 and 141 too, with recourse to similar expressions, the same message has already been given. The following statement too conveys the same reality in another turn of phrase thus:

157) If you are in doubt of what we have revealed unto you, ask then those who had been reading the Book earlier to you. Indeed, there has come to you the Truth from your Lord; do not, then, be from among the doubters.<sup>270</sup>

Here too the reference is to the Jews and the Christians, who are again being considered, in very clear terms, as those who had been reading the same Book earlier to the Arabs. It should, however, be born in mind at this stage that the address to the holy Prophet to enquire with the People of the Book concerning the truthful nature of the Book cannot be factual, nor was he in need of it in any way, as the facts concerning the previous lives had been kept concealed from humanity then. Nevertheless, it is, in reality, intended here to convey in a marvelous fashion the existence of the previous bearers of the Qur'an in the current human race too. Thus, both the current phrases 'those who had been reading the Book earlier to you' and 'those who have been given the Book before you' and also 'that which has been sent down to us and sent down to you too' and 'we have sent down to you the Book that was being recited to them' contained in statement no. 155 all belong to the same family as regard to their stunning nature. Likewise, they can also be compared to 'those to whom we had given the Book previously too' and 'those who have been given the Knowledge previously too' mentioned under statement nos. 137 and 141 respectively, which quite clearly reveal that they are all uniform in their intent and mutually interpret one another too.

158) When there has come to them a messenger from the Almighty confirming that which had been with them too, a section of those who have been given the Book *previously too* cast the Book of the Almighty behind their backs as though they do not know it.<sup>271</sup>

It is very much obvious that the fact of the previous inheritance of the Qur'an by the Jews and the Christians, as disclosed through 'believe in what we have revealed repeatedly confirming that which had been with you too' by addressing them directly in statement no. 154, is now being conveyed in the



context of the entire humanity as well through 'confirming that which had been with them too' that each and every of its nations has also been made to inherit it on different earlier occasions individually too. Then, the phrase 'a section of those who have been given the Book *previously too* cast the Book of the Almighty behind their backs' is particularly describing the Jewish and the Christian inheritors in this context. This is the reason why they are immediately and very meaningfully derided through 'as though they do not know *it*' that how can they are so much ignorant of, and opposed to, their own Book. Remember, they have similarly been mocked at under statement no. 153 through 'then too a section of them is turning aside, paying no attention' too. Thus, with respect to the Jews and the Christians, consider now the striking similarity of expression, both literal and meaningful, between the current phrase 'a section of those who have been given the Book *previously too*' and the one 'those who have been given a share in *the inheritance of the Book*' contained in statement no. 153 as to how uniformly they are conveying the very same reality with recourse to two different expressions and as to how convincingly they are mutually reinforcing one another.

159) O the Children of Israel, remember the favor that I have bestowed on you, and keep your pledge to me, I will keep to you mine, and dread me alone. Believe in that which I have sent down confirming that which had been with you too, do not be the first to deny it, do not sell my Signs for a small price, and fear me alone.<sup>272</sup>

Immediately after carrying on the entire discussion in the context of the humanity as a whole in the initial 39 verses of the very first chapter, any of the nations of the world is particularly being addressed for the first time in the Qur'an. And the credit of this honor, rather than going to its current bearers and inheritors, the Arab themselves, goes only to the Children of Israel. It can, thus, very well be inferred from it that this privilege is only in order to emphasize the fact that its immediately previous inheritance belonged only to them. Remember, the Qur'an itself had commenced with the statement '*This is that Book*' to suggest to mankind that it is an enormously ancient Book which each and everyone of them is familiar with previously too. So, refreshing their memory of that very divine favor upon them through 'remember the favor I have bestowed on you,' the Children of Israel are

directly being given the lesson through 'Believe in that which I have sent down confirming that which had been with you too' that the current Book is the one that had been entrusted to them and given in their own legacy too previously. This is the reason why they are subsequently being counseled through 'do not be the first to deny it' that on account of them having been its immediately preceding bearers, it is for them to repose their faith in their own Book well before the others today, as otherwise, in view of this entitlement, they would only be deemed to be its first deniers. It, thus, adequately solves the perplexity as to how could the Children of Israel be considered to be the first to deny the Qur'an when it were only the pagans of Arabia who denied it initially. And as the disbelieving classes present in them believed in it neither then nor can they do it now, they are, thus, very comprehensively cautioned against selling all those divine Signs or the different revelations of the Qur'an for a price through 'do not sell my Signs for a small price.' So, their present denial of the Qur'an too is being considered as they selling it for a price, which is a significant hint at their previous legacy of it, because to sell something one has to own it first.

160) When our Clear Signs are *constantly* being recited to them, the disbelievers say of the Truth, when it has come to them, "This is a clear magic." Or do they say that he himself has forged this *Qur'an*? Say, "If I have forged it myself, then you shall not in any way be able to save me from the Almighty. He knows all your concoctions concerning it very well. Sufficient is he as a witness between me and you, and he is all-forgiving, all-merciful." Say, "I am not a unique messenger, nor do I know what shall be done to me or to you. I merely follow what is revealed to me; I am only a plain warner." Say, "Just consider if this is from the Almighty, and you disbelieve in it, but a witness from among the Children of Israel testifies to a similar Book, and come to believe in *this Qur'an too*, while you pride yourselves! Indeed, the Almighty does not guide the wicked people." Those who disbelieve say of the ones who believe, "Had this been a good thing, they would not have surpassed us to it." And since they did not receive guidance from it, they will say, "This is the same old lie." Whereas, the Book of Moses was a guide and mercy earlier to it, and this Book is merely a confirmer of an Arabic language *Qur'an*, that it may warn the evildoers and be good news to the righteous.<sup>273</sup>



All the verses of the current statement are making an extremely coherent statement concerning merely a solitary Book, the Qur'an. We have already repeatedly observed as to how the Qur'an introduces itself as 'a'yah' and 'bayyinah.' Likewise, it also occasionally presents itself as 'a'yah bayyinah' (Clear Sign) or its plural 'a'yaat bayyinaat' (Clear Signs) too. For instance:

160.1) Likewise, we have sent this Qur'an down as Clear Signs...<sup>274</sup>

It is, thus, clearly evident that 'the Truth,' in the very first verse here is being used in apposition to the previously appearing 'our Clear Signs,' which renders the latter to be only the Qur'an and its different revelations. So, after conveying the disbelievers the significant fact of the multiple revelations of the Qur'an upon them in their previous lives itself through the phrase 'When our Clear Signs are *constantly* being recited to them,' they are being astonishingly quizzed as to how could the holy Prophet forge it himself this time around? Remember, the precise divine attributes of 'forgiving' and 'merciful' denoting the multiple creations of man are being reiterated once again through 'he is all-forgiving, all-merciful' on this occasion too. Then, further reinforcing this reality of the multiple revelations of the Qur'an and also undermining the accusation of its forgery, a startling disclosure is being made through the statement 'I am not a unique messenger' that the holy Prophet isn't at all the lone messenger who has brought this magnificent Book, but many more of the other earlier messengers have been bestowed with it too! This sounds rather logical too, because when the Qur'an has been sent down repeatedly to so many nations, it is but obvious that it must have been done only through multiple messengers. This is the reason why an exceptionally unequivocal statement is subsequently being made concerning the testimony of an Israelite witness to a Book similar to the Qur'an and his reposing faith in the current Qur'an as well through the passage 'but a witness from among the Children of Israel testifies to a similar Book, and come to believe in *this Qur'an too*'. So, can this 'Book similar to the Qur'an' be anything other than the previous revelation of the Qur'an itself! Remember, the Qur'an has already been described through 'it is a Book similar and oft-repeated' under statement no. 118 to be such a repeatedly revealed book whose different revelations are only similar to each other. Thus, the disbelievers are once again being jeered at and told that their present antagonism towards the

Qur'an is of no use, as those of the Israelites who have already reposed their faith in it when it was given to them in their own inheritance previously shall testify to it through their state of affairs and ultimately believe in it currently too. And then, that very previous Qur'an of the Israelites is subsequently being described in a very meaningful way through 'Whereas, the Book of Moses was a guide and mercy earlier to it.' It should once again be remembered that by deliberately creating an apparent ambiguity concerning its real identity, the Book of Prophet Moses hasn't been specified here. Thus, in view both of the current mode of expression and also the fact of the well-organized discussion all through the current statement in the context only of the Qur'an, it is all the more apparent that the very Qur'an revealed previously upon the Israelites is itself being termed as the Book of Moses here! And, hence, this phrase further interprets and emphasizes the earlier one 'I am not a unique messenger.' This is why the current Qur'an is again being distinguished from that of the Prophet Moses through 'this Book is merely a confirmer of an Arabic language' to state that it is merely a confirmer of another Arabic Qur'an. Remember, 'Arabic Language' is directly and flawlessly appearing as the object of 'confirmer' here. Thus, our contention of the fact of the previous multiple revelations of the Qur'an merely in one Arabic language, made under statement no. 118 basing ourselves on the phrases 'an Arabic Qur'an' and 'we have made that an Arabic Qur'an,' find another compelling argument in its support in the form of the current statement too.

Besides, consider statement no. 110 once again, wherein, right in the middle of an organized discussion concerning the multiple revelations of the Qur'an, a clear statement had been made with regard to the holy Prophet himself through 'that you may be one of those who have warned in a clear Arabic language.' It is now very much obvious from its precise context that there too the address to the holy Prophet was in the context of the many revelations of the Qur'an and its different conveyers merely in one Arabic language. It can rightly be inferred from it, thus, that the holy Prophet is merely one of the many messengers who had been given only the Arabic Qur'ans. It is also established through this explication that the Qur'an previously given to the Israelites through Prophet Moses must only have been non-Arabic, a very meaningful indication to which could be found in the



following verse too:

160.2) If we had made it a non-Arabic Qur'an...<sup>275</sup>

When the previous revelation of the Qur'an is also being established upon Prophet Moses, consider now the following seven more different statements that reinforce this contention beyond reasonable doubt:

161) So the one who had stood upon a Clear Sign from his Lord, *could have been like the one who remained opposed to it always?* And, *on account of this previous consistency, now its own witness is reciting it*, whereas the Book of Moses was a guide and mercy earlier to it. It is only they who shall believe in it. And those among the groups who deny it, shall have the Fire as their promised resort. Do not, then, be from among those who doubt it; indeed, it is the Truth from your Lord; yet most people do not believe.<sup>276</sup>

Here too the statement is extremely organized in nature in the context of only the Qur'an. If the previous statement had employed 'Clear Signs' in its plural form, the current one is making use of the singular 'Clear Sign.' Most of the predecessor commentators too have meant only the Qur'an in this latter instance. Besides, it is evident from the mode of expression as well as the use of the past participle 'had' (*kaana* in Arabic) that the first sentence concerns only to the events of the past. So, the reference here could be to any of the believers of the previous Qur'an. It is, thus, being conveyed through the omission of the obvious that a person who remained steadfast to the Qur'an previously cannot be equated to the one who never believed in it. Then, the phrase 'And its own witness is reciting it' is pointing to another reality. The pronoun 'it' occurring twice in this phrase together with another five subsequent places too is compulsorily indicating only the 'Clear Sign,' which further strengthens our contention that it is denoting only the Qur'an here. The current phrase, thus, implies that it is that very witness of the previous Qur'an who, on account of his earlier loyalty to it, is reciting it presently too. Now, that witness cannot be anyone other than the very Israelite who is stated, through a similar expression in the previous statement, to have believed in the current Qur'an testifying to an earlier one as well. This is the reason why the same phrase 'whereas the Book of Moses was a guide and mercy earlier to it' mentioned there is also being reiterated here too right in the middle of an organized discussion concerning the Qur'an. Hence, both the phrases of 'its

own witness' and 'one who had stood upon a Clear Sign' imply the same meaning. Remember, we were witness to quite a few instances earlier too wherein two different phrases conveying the same meaning have consecutively been used in a marvelous fashion. And this is the reason why faith is being confined only to this very group of witnesses through 'It is only they who shall believe in it,' which further reinforces the principle laid down earlier that only those members of the present human race shall believe in the current Qur'an who have already believed in it previously too.

It has also to be kept in mind here that contrary to the previous specific phrase of 'but a witness from among the Children of Israel testifies to a similar Book, and believes in this Qur'an too,' the current phrase of 'So the one who had stood upon a Clear Sign from his Lord' is only general in nature. It is very much obvious that when the Qur'an was given to the current human race previously through Prophet Moses too, the whole of the believing class present in it hadn't been his followers alone, as it is clear from our previous discussion that we all have only partially been gathered on this earth from many of the other different earths of the universe. So, the former phrase is depicting that particular group of the believers of the present human race who had believed in the Qur'an of Prophet Moses, whereas the latter phrase is common to all those groups who had reposed their faith in the Qur'ans of the other prophets. And it is these very groups which are being referred to as 'And those among the groups who deny it.' Thus, a great degree of harmony is established between this phrase and the one 'while a few groups do not recognize some of it' contained in statement no. 147, and consequently even these two respective statements too come to mutually interpret each other.

Besides, it should also be kept in mind that if the previous statement considered the different revelations of the Qur'an to be similar in nature, the current one regards all of them to be merely one and the same through 'And its own witness is reciting it,' which further emphasizes the principle laid down under statement no. 118 that the term 'Qur'an' applies to the Parent Book in the same way as it applies to any of its offshoots as well, and that all of them enjoy the status of just one book in the divine wisdom. It can now be pondered as to how brilliantly both these statements, which are also among some of the most challenging statements of the Qur'an, are, on being considered in their proper perspectives, shedding their respective ambiguities



themselves and stringing together all the previously scattered statements in an extremely coherent fashion.

162) Indeed, we have given Moses the Book, and a dispute has arisen concerning itself *when it has come to them once again*. Had not a word from your Lord gone forth, the matter would have certainly been decided between them. They are certainly in suspicious doubt concerning itself.<sup>277</sup>

This verse is the continuation of statement no. 127, which shows that the statement made there through the phrase 'The Word that is being had with you is the one that we already had with the other messengers before you too' concerning the previous revelations of the Qur'an on the messengers other than the holy Prophet is, in order to serve as an example, further being strengthened with the mention of a particular messenger. Remember, exactly the same strategy has also been adhered to very recently under statement no. 160 too through the statements 'I am not a unique messenger' followed by 'whereas, the Book of Moses was a guide and mercy earlier to it.' This is the reason why the true identity of the Book of Prophet Moses has been deliberately obscured here too on the very lines of the previous two statements. Now, apart from the arguments put forth there, it compulsorily follows from the mode of the current expression that the same pronoun 'itself' should commonly indicate only 'the Book' here. Thus, the Book the current disbelievers are being criticized through 'They are certainly in suspicious doubt concerning itself' becomes the Book of Moses. In this manner, the current Qur'an is directly and unmistakably being termed as the one that has already been given to Prophet Moses earlier.

Besides, the complete consistency of denotation existing between the current statement and statement no. 149 should also be taken into account, which renders them to be mutually consolidating and interpreting one another: if a statement was made there concerning the current disbelievers through 'It is only after the Knowledge has reached them that they have got divided due to rivalry among themselves,' the same is being explained here through 'Indeed, we have given Moses the Book, and a dispute has arisen concerning itself *when it has come to them once again*,' by substituting 'the Knowledge' with 'the Book of Moses.' Then, after reiterating the uniform warnings of 'Had not a word from your Lord gone forth, the matter would

have certainly been decided between them' at both these places, if they had been taunted through 'Indeed, those after whom the Book has been caused to be inherited *by others* are themselves in suspicious doubt concerning it' there, a more direct statement is being made here to convey the same message through 'Indeed, they are in suspicious doubt concerning itself.' Thus, another significant argument is found here too in support of 'the Knowledge' to be the previously revealed Qur'an merely upon the present man. The following two more statements too depict in varied idioms the same antagonism of the present disbelievers of the Qur'an to the one brought to them by Prophet Moses earlier:

163) They did not esteem the Almighty the way he deserves when they said, "The Almighty has not sent down anything on any human being." Say, "Who had sent down the Book that Moses had brought as a light and guidance to mankind, which you used to tear to pieces, revealing some and concealing much? *Remember*, you are being taught that which neither you nor your fathers were acquainted with." Say, "The Almighty *sent it down*." Then leave them alone, playing their game of plunging. Whereas, this Book which we have sent down is a blessed one and a confirmer of the Book which preceded it, that you may warn with it the mother of the towns and those surrounding it; those who believe in the Hereafter and guard their prayers believe in it too.<sup>278</sup>

The whole of the chapter number six of the Qur'an to which the current verses too belong has been revealed at Makkah well before the holy Prophet's journey or *hijrah* to Madina, which reveals that the address here concerns only the pagans of Arabia, rather than the Children of Israel, as all the dialogue of the Muslims with the latter has taken place only after the *hijrah*. Besides, the entire chapter has been revealed all at once, which suggests that there just cannot be any specific circumstance of revelation for any of its verses, particularly the current ones. Moreover, the denial of the very concept of the divine revelation and prophethood, which is evident from the present statement of 'The Almighty has not sent down anything on any human being,' can only be the hallmark of the former and the latter cannot be expected to make such a drastic statement, howsoever antagonistic they might have been towards Islam then. It can, thus, rightly be concluded from it that it is only the former who are being reprimanded here on their denunciation of the divine



revelation and are also being reminded of the sending down to them of the Qur'an previously through Prophet Moses as well, which they too had torn to pieces and concealed much of it from the masses then. This is the reason why the true identity of the Book of Moses has, in line with all the previous statements, been kept concealed once again here too and also attributed with the universal attribute of 'a light and guidance to mankind,' which cannot in any way be the feature of a book sent down merely for the guidance of one particular nation like the Torah. Remember this latter book has been referred merely as 'guidance to the Children of Israel' under chapter 17:2 of the Qur'an. And this is why it is also stated subsequently through 'you are being taught that which neither you nor your fathers were acquainted with' that this great reality hitherto concealed from them and their forefathers is being disclosed to them only currently. And yet again, this is the reason why the present Qur'an is immediately being distinguished from that previous one through the phrase 'Whereas, this Book which we have sent down is a blessed one and a confirmer of the Book which preceded it.' We shall very shortly debate the immediate context of these verses, which shall further strengthen our present contention.

164) When the Truth has come to them from us, they say, "Why has he not been given the like of that Moses was given?" Have they not rejected that also which Moses had been given earlier? They say, "A pair of magicians supporting each other." And they say, "We reject all."<sup>279</sup>

This verse precedes those discussed under statement no. 137, wherein a statement has been made through the passage 'Indeed, we have kept conveying them the Word constantly that they may receive admonition' concerning the previous multiple revelations of the Qur'an upon the present humanity and its continued acceptance only by the believing class each time. So, in this very context, and contrary to these believers, the pagans of Arabia are, on their demand of the holy Prophet too receiving the same sort of book which Prophet Moses had been given, very unequivocally being countered through 'Have they not rejected that also which Moses had been given earlier?' Thus, the existence of the pagans of Arabia in the people who disbelieved in the Book of Moses earlier is also once again established. This is the reason why their statement "They say, 'A pair of magicians supporting each other.' And they

say, 'We reject all' has been advanced to indicate these former and current denials, as if this act too is arising from their state of affairs. Even though the plea of the disbelievers concerned only the Torah that was revealed upon Prophet Moses, but they are being countered by terming the Qur'an itself to be the one that had been revealed upon him for their own guidance, which too they had denied earlier. This is why the word 'earlier' has very marvelously been appended only to the response given to them through 'Have they not rejected that which Moses had been given earlier,' rather than their original demand of 'Why has he not been given the like of that Moses was given?' And further emphasizing the previous revelations of the Qur'an upon the current human race, the matter is further elaborated subsequently through the aforesaid 'Indeed, we have kept conveying them the Word constantly that they may receive admonition.' Thus, both the current verse and the ones subsequently occurring and discussed in statement no. 137 are depicting the continued persistence of the believers and the disbelievers in their respective deeds.

165) Who could be more wicked than the one who is reminded with the Signs of his Lord, yet he turns away from them? We shall definitely get back at the sinners. Indeed, we have given Moses the Book, so be not in doubt in its receipt. We had made it a guide to the Children of Israel. So long as they endured patiently and reposed faith in our Signs, we appointed from among them leaders giving guidance under our command. Surely your Lord shall decide between them on the Day of Judgment in what they are disputing.<sup>280</sup>

The current chapter no. 32 itself has commenced by first indicating the previous multiple revelations of the Qur'an through the statement 'Repeated revelations of the Book, of which there is no doubt, are from the Lord of all the worlds' and subsequently putting across the reality of the multiple creations of man too, which we have considered in detail under statement no. 104. It is very much evident now that by persisting with the same continuity of speech in the current verses too both these aspects are also being mentioned in the context of merely the present man. So, with the current statement of the disbelievers being reminded again and again with the various Signs of the Almighty, it is intended to drive home exactly the same message. This is the



reason why the brevity contained in this statement is immediately being elaborated in the subsequent verse through 'Indeed, we have given Moses the Book, so be not in doubt in its receipt. We had made it a guide to the Children of Israel.' As could clearly be gathered from this verse, an ambiguity has once again initially been generated around the Book given to Prophet Moses, and the same is subsequently said to have been made a guide to the Israelites too. And right in the middle of this well-structured statement, as a parenthetical expression, the address to the holy Prophet through the passage 'so be not in doubt in its receipt' unmistakably conveys that he has currently been given the very same Book that has already been given to Prophet Moses earlier. And this is why the Israelites are being alerted in the last verse that the true nature of the Book they are currently disputing would be disclosed to them only on the Day of Judgment.

Consider now the excellent similarity of expression, both literal and meaningful, between the current statement and the one contained in statement no. 162. There is a mention of the same statement of 'Indeed, we have given Moses the Book' at both of these places uniformly. Then the expression 'a dispute has arisen concerning itself' there is further being explained through 'Surely your Lord shall decide between them on the Day of Judgment in what they are disputing' here. Similarly, the statement 'They are certainly in suspicious doubt concerning itself' made there is being supplemented with 'so be not in doubt in its receipt' here. The current statement is, thus, brilliantly interpreting that statement too.

166) Has he not been informed through the Books of Moses, and of Abraham too who fulfilled *his commandments* that none shall bear the burden of another?<sup>281</sup>

Initiating a well-articulated discussion five verses earlier in this chapter concerning the multiple creations of man through the statement 'To the Almighty belongs whosoever is in the skies and the earths,' he has subsequently stated to have been made to grow from the Earth like vegetation as well through 'He knew you the best when he created you from the earth,' which we have dealt with individually under statement nos. 10 and 54.2 respectively. Similarly, by maintaining the same continuity of speech even after the verses of the current statement, if he has stated to have been created

previously as well through 'That it was he who caused to die and brought back to life,' the Qur'an has also declared to have been revealed multiply through 'This is a warner from among the former warners,' which too have been discussed separately under statement nos. 54 and 116 respectively. Thus, in this precise context, it is very much evident that the current address 'Has he not been informed through the Books of Moses' concerns those of the people of the present human race who had been the bearers of the Qur'an under the prophethood of Moses too in their previous lives. And it is only in order to convey this reality of the revelation of more than one book upon Prophet Moses that the phrase 'Books of Moses' in its plural form is intentionally being used. Furthermore, by connecting this statement with the subsequent one of 'of Abraham too who fulfilled,' another significant reality is also being disclosed that Prophet Abraham too had been bestowed with the Qur'an previously whose followers are also present in the current human race similar to those of Prophet Moses! So, consider now the following statement that conveys this very reality in the most unequivocal terms and leaves no scope for any wavering whatsoever in this respect:

167) Indeed, this was present in the earlier Books too, the Books of Abraham and Moses.<sup>282</sup>

This statement is so obvious and straightforward in its denotation that it absolutely requires no further explanation. Thus, the current statement of 'Indeed, this was present in the earlier Books too' bears immense similarity of expression with the one 'Truly, it is among the scriptures of the ancients too' mentioned right in the beginning of the current chapter under statement no. 110 and casts substantial light upon its true import as well. Now, when the previous revelation of the Qur'an has also been established upon Prophets Abraham and Moses too in addition to the holy Prophet, the following two more statements supplement this list with many more other prophets too:

168) There is none from among the people of the Book who shall not come to believe in it before his death, and on the Day of Judgment it shall be a witness to him. So because of the wrongdoing of the Jewry and their excessive obstruction of *the masses* from the path of the Almighty we forbade them certain good things that had been lawful to them. And it was also because of their taking usury, whereas it was prohibited to them, and



their unfair utilization of others' wealth. For the disbelievers in them we have prepared a painful punishment. But the firmly rooted in the Knowledge from among them and the *other* believers repose their faith in what has been sent down to you, and what has been sent down before you, establish the prayer, give the zakat, and believe in the Almighty and the Last Day. We shall shortly give them a great reward. We have certainly revealed to you similar to what we have revealed to Noah and the messengers after him, and *similar to what* we have revealed to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, his offspring, Jesus, Job, Jonah, Aaron, and Solomon, and to David we gave the Psalms, and also to many more messengers whom we have already narrated to you before and many others whom we have not narrated to you; and to Moses the Almighty spoke directly — messengers bearing glad tidings as well as warning, so that mankind should have no plea against the Almighty after the messengers; God is the all-mighty, the all-wise.<sup>283</sup>

The first of these verses has already been dealt with under statement no. 140 to show that all the previous believers of the Qur'an existing in the current human race would again come to believe in it before the end could down upon them in their ongoing lives as well. Then, as a group of these previous believers of the Qur'an is also concerned with the current Jewish nation on account of its earlier revelation upon them too, both they and all the other previous believers existing in the current human race are once again separately being referred to through the statement 'But the firmly rooted in the Knowledge from among them and the *other* believers repose their faith in what has been sent down to you, and what has been sent down before you.' Thus, this latter verse is considerably interpreting and elaborating the brevity present in the first verse.

It can now be ascertained from the subsequent statement of 'We have certainly revealed to you similar to what we have revealed to...' that a parallel is being drawn here between the revelations upon the holy Prophet and a few others. If, among them, the names of a total of ten Prophets namely Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Jesus, Job, Jonah, Aaron, and Solomon have literally been enumerated here, still others have also been indicated through such general phrases as 'the messengers after him' and 'his offspring.' This statement appears to be silent concerning the identity of the

thing revealed upon these prophets. However, the subsequent phrase 'and to David we gave the Psalms' very marvelously appended at the end of this statement discloses that the fact of the matter is quite the contrary. Thus, the twin realities of the singling out of Prophet David with the declaration of him having been bestowed with the Psalms and the likening of the revelations of the remaining prophets to that of the holy Prophet clearly imply that a mention is being made here concerning merely two Books: the Qur'an and the Psalms; if Prophet David was given the Psalms presently, all the others were given the Qur'an in their previous lives! Furthermore, the subsequent passage 'and also to many more messengers whom we have already narrated to you before, and many others whom we have not narrated to you' reveals that these are not the only ones who had been given the Qur'an previously, but there are still many more in only the current human race, and also there are others who do not at all find any mention in it. That is, only a few of the messengers have been mentioned herein with whom we are familiar with in the context of only the current humanity. Then, the passage 'so that mankind should have no plea against the Almighty after the messengers' conveys that the strategy behind the multiple creations of man and the repeated revelations of the Qur'an upon him through various prophets is in full force in order to test the humans variously, so that none should come up with any excuse on the Day of Judgment in support of his worldly defiance. The particular mention on this occasion of two of the most essential divine attributes of 'all-mighty' and 'all-wise' too are extremely meaningful, as they very forcefully indicate once again the creative genius and the divine wisdom behind this elaborate and deep-seated strategy. Thus, all the verses of the current statement are very coherently bound together under the dual philosophy of the multiple creations of man and the repeated revelations of the Qur'an.

169) He has ordained for you as Religion that which he had commanded to Noah, that which we had revealed to yourself, that which we had commanded to Abraham, Moses, and Jesus: 'establish the Religion and do not get divided in it.' Unbearable for the polytheists is that which you are calling them to. The Almighty chooses to himself whomsoever he pleases and guides to himself whosoever turns in repentance. It is only after the Knowledge has reached them that they have got divided due to rivalry among themselves. Had not a word from your Lord gone forth till an



appointed term, the matter would have certainly been decided between them. Indeed, those after whom (i.e., after their respective turns) the Book has been caused to be inherited by others are themselves in suspicious doubt concerning it. Therefore invite them and stand steadfast as you have been commanded, and do not follow their desires...<sup>284</sup>

All these verses too are very coherently related with each other. By addressing humanity in general in the very first verse through the phrase 'He has ordained for you as religion,' and commanding it against creating divisions between them in the religion through 'do not get divided in it,' the second verse, on the contrary, mentions the very divisions they have created between them through the phrase 'they have got divided due to rivalry among themselves.' And both of these verses are joined together with the third one through the sentence connector 'therefore' (*fa* in original Arabic text). Thus, when a lesson has been given through the second verse, which we have already considered in detail under statement no. 149, that the Qur'an has also been given in the legacy of all the different nations of the present human race on different previous occasions too, and that it is the turn of the Arabs today, it appears from it that the prophets being dealt with in the interrelated preceding verse must be in the context of this very reality alone.

Consider now the first verse, where a total of five prophets namely Noah, Mohammed, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus find a mention, each connected by the conjunction 'and' (*wa* in Arabic). It should be remembered that this particular conjunction in the Arabic language points towards repugnance and estrangement between the words it connects. Thus, the current verse apparently conveys that Islam has also been founded upon the different conventional Books given to the other four prophets mentioned herein besides the Qur'an given to the holy Prophet, whereas the fact of the matter remains that the latter Book itself comprehensively contains in it all the fundamental teachings of the former Books, and that all the conduct of the Muslims is rooted in it alone. Besides, the context of the phrase 'that which we had revealed to yourself' should also be taken into consideration as to how stunningly it appears right in the middle of those former prophets in the past tense. Thus, on account of these contentions, together with the fact of its correlation with the immediately subsequent verse, it is all the more clear that the Qur'an sent down to the holy Prophet today has already been given to him

and the other prophets mentioned herein previously too, and that the religion of the Muslims today is precisely the same that had earlier been established through its revelation on those prophets too. As such, the Book and the Religion are the same, but as they have been revealed and instituted at different places, among different human races, and through different prophets, the present expression has only deliberately been used to denote all these realities. And it is for this reason alone that the holy Prophet is being commanded in the last verse to remain steadfast in his mission and not to pay any attention to the desires of the disbelievers as their present antagonism towards the Qur'an isn't at all new, but a very old one, and that they shall remain obsessed with it always. Thus, all the verses of the current statement once again impart the lesson of the multiple creations of man and the repeated revelations of the Qur'an upon him in an extremely organized idiom.

In fact, the current verses are also bound together with all the previous ones of the current chapter no. 42 under this dual philosophy of the multiple creations of man and the repeated revelations of the Qur'an. Hence, at the very outset, it is being declared through 'Likewise, God, the all-mighty, the all-wise, reveals to you and those before you' that in the same way as the holy Prophet and the others before him were inspired in their earlier lives, they are again being inspired in their current lives too. Remember, the revelation being sent down to the present messengers has been, through the use of an extremely challenging expression of 'likewise,' likened to something whose true identity has mysteriously been concealed only to imply very meaningfully the revelations upon them in their previous lives. Then, as to where these messengers might have received those divine revelations is subsequently being hinted at once again through the passage 'Whosoever is in the skies and the earths belongs to him, and he is the exalted, the supreme. The skies are close to splitting asunder *due to the weight* from above them, whereas the angels sing the praise of their Lord and ask forgiveness for those on the earths' that it could be anywhere through out the length and breadth of this gigantic universe brimming with innumerable human civilizations, as all the universal phenomena belongs only to him. We have already dealt with the last of these verses under statement no. 17 too. And this is not all, as the succeeding verse 'And likewise we have sent down an Arabic Qur'an to you that you may warn with it the mother of towns and those around it' is further particularizing the



earlier prophethood of the holy Prophet to state that he is presently being given an Arabic Qur'an in the same way as he had been given some other one previously too. This is the reason why it is being very loudly and clearly proclaimed through the next verse 'Had the Almighty so willed, he would have made them one single nation' that it would have sufficed the Almighty to afford humanity just one single unified life at any given place in the form of one single nation in order to establish his argument upon it and reward or punish it, and there would not have been any necessity for him to have recourse to such a comprehensive and deep-seated strategy of giving them multiple lives all through the universe and testing them variously. And stressing this very reality, it is subsequently stated through 'He has ordained for you as Religion that which he had commanded to Noah, that which we had revealed to yourself, that which we had commanded to Abraham, Moses, and Jesus' that today the religion of the Muslims is the one that had also been established through these and many more other prophets earlier. Thus, this latter statement and the former one 'Likewise, God, the all-mighty, the all-wise, reveals to you and those before you' mutually interpret and reinforce one another.

Now, when the fundamental objective behind the multiple creations of man is to test man with assorted and diverse worldly lives, it could rightly be inferred from it that the prophets and the messengers too should not be bestowed with the prophethood in each of their lives, but they should also be tested through ordinary lives as well, so that none should get an opportunity on the Day of Judgment to take exception to their privileged position. The Qur'an is just articulating this very reality in the following words:

170) And *recall* when the Almighty took the Covenant from the prophets, saying, 'If there comes to you a messenger after I have given you a Book and wisdom confirming that which had been with you, you shall definitely repose your faith in him and assist him.' He asked, 'Do you agree and take this Covenant of mine as binding on you?' They said, 'We do agree.' He said, 'Then bear witness, and I shall also be with you among the witnesses.' Then whosoever turns away thereafter, it is they who will be the transgressors. Do they seek a religion other than the Almighty's, while whosoever is in the skies and the earths has willingly or unwillingly submitted only to him, and to him shall they be returned? Say, 'We believe

in the Almighty, and in what has been sent down to us, and in what has been sent down to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, his offspring, and in what has been given to Moses, Jesus, and the other prophets from their Lord; we do not differentiate between any of them, and we submit only to him.'<sup>285</sup>

It can clearly be discerned from the mode of expression employed as well as the statement 'We believe in the Almighty, and in what has been sent down to us' that the entire discussion in the current statement is being carried out in the context of the Qur'an alone. Besides, it is also evident here that the Almighty had taken a pledge from a whole host of messengers that if they were given a Book anytime, thereafter another messengers comes to them confirming the one they had already been bestowed with, then they should believe in it and assist the one who brings it to them. This undertaking, thus, entails that both the confirming as well as the confirmed messengers should exist simultaneously in order that the latter repose their faith in the former and also assist him. It is now very much obvious that the different messengers reposing their faith in another of them sent to them later on is neither practical nor possible in one single life, as a messenger cannot preach and also be preached at the same time. It can, thus, fairly easily be inferred from it that the sending out of the prophets with a Book and they themselves reposing their faith in another prophet sent to them later on are two entirely different aspects pertaining to their own two different lives. That is to say that if they are given a Book in one of their lives and bestowed with prophethood, they would subsequently be provided with an ordinary life under the prophethood of some other prophet, the Book given to them previously would be given in inheritance to him, and they would be asked to believe in it afresh and assist him. In this way, in accordance with the phrase 'confirming that which had been with you,' the latterly revealed Book confirms its own previous revelations and presents them in its current manifestation.

This is the reason why the expression thereafter has totally been inverted in presenting a practical model of the fulfillment of this Covenant, where the holy Prophet is being asked to say in very clear terms, 'We believe in the Almighty, and in what has been sent down to us, and in what has been sent down to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, his offspring, and in what has been given to Moses, Jesus, and the other prophets from their Lord.' Obviously,



when a prophet comes confirming the former prophets, he would only say that the Book he has been given today is the one that had already been given to such and such prophets earlier too. This verse, thus, precisely interprets and removes the apparent ambiguity contained in the first one of the current statement. And this is the reason why it is also stated through 'we do not differentiate between any of them' that none of the prophets enjoy any privileged position with respect to the others in this respect. It should, however, be noted that this parity between the prophets is only in the sense they are all the bearers of the Qur'an at some point in time, whereas, in the context of merely the current human race, they only enjoy an inferior status compared to that of the holy Prophet, as he is alone the bearer of the 'the fairest discourse' in it. It is also clear from it that these relatively inferior prophets of the current human race are elevated to the superior most position in other races where they are also bestowed with 'the fairest discourse' similar to the holy Prophet presently. Thus, the position and eminence of the prophets isn't at all real, but only relative in nature.

Furthermore, it doesn't necessarily follow from this statement, as it isn't an exhaustive one, that all the prophets given the Qur'an previously too should also be present under the current prophethood of the holy Prophet. In this manner, this is merely an instance of the practical model of the Covenant taken from the prophets. This is because wherever in the past it has also been sent down on the different prophets, both the confirming and the confirmed ones among them continue to change accordingly.

Consider also the uniformity of expression existing between both the current and the previous two statements, which further emphasizes their true import. At both of these places if some of the prophets find a common mention, some others are unique too, which go to prove that the names mentioned herein aren't in any way all-inclusive. Then, in order to indicate the revelation of the Qur'an on other prophets too, if a statement was made under statement no. 168 through 'and also to many more messengers whom we have already narrated to you before and many others whom we have not narrated to you,' the same message is being given in the current one through 'and the other prophets.' It could, thus, be pondered as to how well-founded all our arguments were concerning the Qur'an to be the 'confirmation of that which preceded it,' 'confirmer of that which preceded it,' 'confirmer of the

book which preceded it,' 'confirmer of an Arabic language,' 'confirmer of that which had been with you,' and 'confirmer of that which had been with them' that it only confirms its own previous revelations. The following two more statements too point towards the existence of former prophets as ordinary humans in the prophethood of the holy Prophet:

171) Do they only await the days of *punishment* of those who passed away before them? Say, 'Await then; I myself would be among you waiting.' We shall then rescue our messengers and the believers likewise. It is incumbent upon us that we rescue the believers.<sup>286</sup>

Note that these verses are the continuation of those already mentioned under statement no. 11, and are together making an extremely coherent statement. So, after making a statement there concerning the ineffectiveness of all sorts of divine signs to the disbelieving classes of the various human races given existence through out the length and breadth of the universe, the disbelievers of our own race are being warned through the first verse here with the punishment of general eradication meted out to quite a few of them. It is, then, being prophesied through the passage 'We shall then rescue our messengers and the believers likewise' that when the current race too is struck with this punishment of extinction in future, the prophets and the believers present in it would be rescued from it in the same way the respective prophets and the believers of the other races given existence elsewhere in the universe too have got rescued earlier. Thus, here too the thing that is being likened to through 'likewise' is once again being very meaningfully concealed on the very lines of statement no. 169. Now, when the prophets are still to exist in the current human race to witness the eventual punishment to be administered to it in future, they can only be those who have been given existence in it as ordinary humans. In this manner, the general conclusion we have drawn earlier concerning the deliverance of the believing classes each time an earth is struck with an all-enveloping and all-exterminating punishment receives further emphasis. Thus, the presentation of this last verse in the proper perspective has lead to the significant revelation of the fact that 'likewise' is only associated with the phrase preceding it, rather than the one following it, which the predecessors have been constrained to interpret in the absence of any other meaningful alternative.



172) Ask those of our prophets whom we have sent earlier to you if we had appointed gods worthy of worship other than the All-merciful?<sup>287</sup>

This statement is so obvious in its import that it absolves us from further explanation in this regard. It has to be remembered, however, that it is not at all intended here to direct the holy Prophet to make this enquiry with the other prophets, nor was there any necessity for him to do so. It is, on the contrary, only to convey the existence of the former prophets under his own prophethood as ordinary humans in a marvelous fashion.

When many of the prophets of the current human race have, in addition to their respective conventional books, also been bestowed with the Qur'an previously a pertinent question necessarily arises in the minds as to what could be the right standing of the holy Prophet in this modern perspective, and as to what sort of distinction he enjoys vis-à-vis the other prophets? We shall explore the answer to this question too from the Qur'an itself:

173) It is he who has sent among the unlettered ones a messenger from among themselves, who recites to them his Signs, purifies them, and teaches them the Book and the wisdom, though they had been in obvious error before. And sent him among the others from among themselves who have not yet joined them, and he is the all-mighty, all-wise. That is the bounty of the Almighty, which he bestows on whomsoever he pleases, and the Almighty is the master of the highest bounty.<sup>288</sup>

The prophethood of the holy Prophet concerns the humanity as a whole, as is evident from the following all-inclusive statements:

173.1) We have sent you as a bearer of glad tidings and a warner to the whole mankind...<sup>289</sup>

173.2) Say, "O Mankind, I am the messenger of the Almighty to you all..."<sup>290</sup>

And it is clear from the phrase 'the unlettered ones' here that it denotes only the Arabs. Thus, 'the others' imply the remainder of the present mankind other than the Arabs. So, the current statement is making a dual classification of the current human race into the Arabs and the others, and also describing the brevity present in these latter two verses. Besides, it is also very much evident that the phrase 'the unlettered ones' has also been joined with 'the others' too with the conjunction 'and.' So, the phrases 'sent among the

unlettered ones a messenger from among themselves' and 'among the others from among themselves' very clearly and extremely powerfully convey that the holy Prophet is personally related to both of these groups; if he was born into the Arabs presently, he has also taken birth into the other nations of the world previously too! This is the reason why the current disbelievers are being motivated very forcefully in the following statement to recognize their own Prophet, which goes to strengthen the current statement even further:

174) Did they not ponder over the Word or has anything come to them which did not come to their forefathers of yore? Or did they not recognize their Messenger, and so deny him? Or do they say that he is possessed? As a matter of fact, he has brought them the Truth, yet most of them are averse to the Truth. Had the Truth followed their desires, then the skies and the earths and whosoever is in them would have surely corrupted. In reality, we have brought them their own Reminder, yet they are turning away from their own Reminder.<sup>291</sup>

As the talk from above is being carried out in the context of all the disbelievers, the address here is only general in nature. And, as established earlier, the terms 'Word,' 'Truth,' and 'Reminder' are all the different attributes of the Qur'an alone. This reveals that the entire discussion in this statement is very coherently being carried out in the context of only the Qur'an. So, the very first verse conveys to the disbelievers that the present Book isn't a unique one that has been revealed for the first time, but has also been given to their previous forefathers as well. It should be born in mind at this stage that these of our forefathers of yore aren't those who have gone by before us in the current human race, but, as a matter of fact, they are those in whose progeny the whole of the current human race has been brought out, which has been duly described under statement no. 76 through 'just as he has originated you in the progeny of another people.' They are, then, astonishingly asked through the passage 'Or did they not recognize their Messenger' whether they have failed to recognize their own Prophet. Remember, the invitation to mankind here concerns recognizing the previous prophethood of the holy Prophet, rather than that of his mere person. Thus, this phrase is particularly interpreting the one 'And sent him among the others from among themselves' contained in the previous statement and making another significant disclosure that apart from taking birth among the Arabs and all the other



nations of the current human race previously, the holy Prophet has also been bestowed with prophethood in all of them too! This is why this fact is further being reinforced subsequently through 'In reality, we have brought them their own Reminder, yet they are turning away from their own Reminder' that in the same way as the holy Prophet had been the messenger of them all, the Qur'an too had been bestowed to them previously. Consider now the following three more statements that strengthen this contention even further:

175) What ails you that you do not repose your faith in the Almighty, whereas the Prophet is calling you to believe in your Lord, and He has already taken your Covenant, if you are believers? It is he who is repeatedly revealing Clear Signs on his servant that he may rescue you from the darkness to the light. Indeed, the Almighty is most kind and merciful.<sup>292</sup>

In the same way as the address in the previous statement was general in nature in the context of all the disbelievers through the phrase 'Did they not ponder over the Word' here too the addressee is the same tribe through the phrase 'What ails you that you do not repose your faith in the Almighty.' It should also be kept in mind here that all the discussion, from the beginning of this chapter itself, is being carried out in the context of the multiple creations of man and his continued gathering between the skies, which has already been dealt with under statement no. 80. So, in this backdrop the Clear Signs are nothing but the Parent Book and its different offshoots that are being repeatedly revealed periodically upon the holy Prophet in the form of the ever newer Qur'ans for the guidance of the current disbelievers. Then, the concluding passage 'Indeed, the Almighty is most kind and merciful' is further stressing this aspect by conveying that the disbelievers are being provided with the repeated opportunities of guidance on account of this very attribute of the divine mercy. Remember, the same attributes of mercy and forgiveness of the Almighty have time and again been repeated earlier too on the occasions of the multiple creations of man. Thus, the statement 'It is he who is repeatedly revealing the Clear Signs on his servant that he may rescue you from the darkness to the light' is interpreting 'Or did they not recognize their Messenger' in the previous statement to state that their Messenger is the one who has already brought to them various Qur'ans previously too for their

own guidance.

176) A Qur'an that we have distinguished, so that you recite it to the people at intervals, and we have revealed it repeatedly. Say, "Whether you believe in it or not, those who have been given the Knowledge previously too, when it is recited to them, do fall down upon their faces prostrating."<sup>293</sup>

Faraqa in Arabic is a verb that also denotes distinguishing one thing from the other. And this very sense is intended in the current statement, because the object of 'distinguished,' i.e. the Qur'an, is appearing as a common noun. Besides, the context too suggests this very usage. So, the true import of a distinguished Qur'an given to the holy Prophet to enable him to recite it to the people at intervals is being disclosed through the subsequent phrase 'we have revealed it repeatedly' that in reality it pertains only to his multiple lives wherein this Qur'an is continually being given to him at regular intervals for the guidance of the people given existence at different locations in the universe. This is the reason why it is subsequently being prophesied through 'those who have been given the Knowledge previously too, when it is recited to them, do fall down upon their faces prostrating' that all those who have believed in the Qur'an previously would also repose their faith in it currently too. Remember, we have already dealt with the last of these verses in detail under statement no. 141. Consider now the following statement that is reinforcing all these previous four of them in extremely clear and unequivocal terms:

177) Indeed, we have repeatedly revealed the Qur'an to you.<sup>294</sup>

Note that the verbal noun *tanzeel* has also accompanied the verb *nazzalna* in the original Arabic text to provide further emphasis upon the repeated revelations of the Qur'an upon the holy Prophet. It should also be born in mind here that in the same way as the multiple revelations of the Qur'an is being mentioned here, the replacing of the current human race with similar other races repeatedly on the Earth is also being talked about in this very context through 'It is we who have created them and strengthened their joints, and we shall repeatedly replace them with their likes whenever we please,' which we have already examined under statement no. 63. Hence, a new aspect



of the correlation between both of these statements comes to light. Thus, the distinction enjoyed by the holy Prophet vis-à-vis the other prophets could be that he has been given the Qur'an repeatedly many a times. An attempt shall now be made to figure out a few more statements concerning him:

178) He has repeatedly revealed to you the truthful Book confirming that which preceded it, and has revealed the Torah and the Gospel too — for the guidance of the people in the past. And *now* he has sent down the Criterion. For those who deny the Signs of the Almighty shall be a severe punishment; God is all-mighty, vengeful. Indeed, there is nothing in the skies and the earths that is hidden from him.<sup>295</sup>

Here too, on the lines of the previous statement, it is being conveyed through the passage 'He has repeatedly revealed to you the truthful Book confirming that which preceded it' that the holy Prophet has been given the Qur'an several times only in the past, each confirming its own previous revelation. This is the reason why its current revelation to him too is subsequently being affirmed again through 'And he has sent down the Criterion.' Remember, 'the Criterion' too is one of the attributes of the Qur'an similar to 'the truthful Book,' and both of them have simultaneously been used once again in an extremely marvelous fashion to denote the Qur'an. This clear and unambiguous statements, thus, further interprets and reinforces all our previous contentions concerning the repeated revelations of the Qur'an on the holy Prophet. It should particularly be remembered here that the predecessor exegetes and researchers had very contentiously debated as to the reason why the statement 'And he has sent down the Criterion' had again been repeated when the earlier statement of 'He has repeatedly revealed to you the truthful Book confirming that which preceded it' itself had adequately conveyed the revelation of the Qur'an and fell short of providing any satisfactory explanation to it. Our ongoing discussion, however, has been able to resolve it quite literally and beyond reasonable doubt.

Note further that another statement of 'and has revealed the Torah and the Gospel too' has also been advanced right in the middle of a well-structured speech concerning these present and previous revelations of the Qur'an upon the holy Prophet. This statement, however, appears to be silent as regards those to whom these scriptures have been given, whereas the specific 'to you'

concerning the Qur'an conveys that it has been given to the holy Prophet. Thus, the location of the word 'previously' here attains extreme significance in determining their true identity, as it would have been more appropriate logically for it to appear right after the mention of the previous revelation of the Qur'an, rather than these books themselves that are occurring subsequent to it. Besides, mentioning the whole statement of 'He has repeatedly revealed to you the truthful Book confirming that which preceded it, and has revealed the Torah and the Gospel too' in a single breath and bringing in 'previously' considerably belatedly in the subsequent verse even after the mention of the revelation of the Torah and the Gospel suggests that this latter word pertains to all the three scriptures, i.e., the Qur'an too besides the Torah and the Gospel, and that 'repeatedly revealed to you' and the subsequently occurring 'revealed' have been coordinated too. That is, in the same way as the Criterion has currently been revealed to the holy Prophet, he has not only been given this truthful Book several times in the past, but has also been bestowed with the Torah and the Gospel too! And it is all the more logical too that when many of the prophets of the current human race have also been bestowed with the Qur'an previously besides their conventional books, the holy Prophet too should have been provided with other books earlier besides the current Qur'an. It is now obvious that these previous books must have been given to him while he had been bestowed with life and given existence on some or the other celestial earths earlier. And the subsequent passage of 'Indeed, there is nothing in the skies and the earths that is hidden from the Almighty' is implying this very reality and suggesting that the Almighty is enlightening us with the knowledge of these unknown realities only through his absolute understanding of all that exists all through the universe. And this is why the Israelites too are said in the following verse to be merely the current inheritors of the Torah, which suggests that it must have been in the legacy of some other people earlier:

178.1) We have given Moses the guidance and caused the Children of Israel to inherit the Book.<sup>296</sup>

This divine revelation, thus, also suggests that the Torah and the Gospel too have been revealed repeatedly earlier. And the credit for the bringing out of this great reality concerning them, rather than going to themselves, goes



only to the Qur'an! Consider now the following statement that reinforces the current proclamation even further and far beyond any reasonable doubt:

179) We have bestowed on you seven of the oft-repeated and the mighty Qur'an.<sup>297</sup>

This verse too has been one of the most challenging ones historically as the true identity of the seven oft-repeated other than the Qur'an given to the holy Prophet has very meaningfully been concealed once again. It should particularly be noted that the conjunction 'and' appearing in between 'seven of the oft-repeated' and 'the mighty Qur'an' implies repugnance and estrangement between the words or phrases it connects. So, both of these coordinated phrases become estranged and independent of each other. Consequently, a whole host of probabilities have been narrated from the predecessors concerning the real import of the former phrase. No consensus has, however, been arrived at any of them between them. And quite a few of them have, after putting across their respective points of view, very humbly and extremely honestly added that its true meaning is understood only by the Almighty alone. For a detailed account of these narrations, exegete Razi's al-Tafseer al-Kabeer should particularly be referred. The difference of opinion on this score can also be gauged from the fact that the companions of the holy Prophet have themselves taken to argue figuratively to establish its identity by ignoring some of his own narrations that hold it to be the seven verses of the chapter 'Opening' of the Qur'an. This is because it is only the words and the meanings derived from them literally that form the basis for the comprehension of the Qur'an.

In the light of the previous Qur'anic declarations, however, it has become so clear that it greatly absolves us of any further clarification in this regard. So, the holy Prophet is being said to have been given two different things here, i.e. seven of the oft-repeated and the Qur'an. Now, in determining the former, consider statement no. 118, which has declared the latter itself to be 'a Book similar and oft-repeated.' Thus, when the birth and the prophethood of the holy Prophet has also been established among the other nations of the world besides the Arabs, and the previous sending down of the Torah and the Gospel to him too has been proved, it is but natural to infer from it that the seven of the oft-repeated given to the holy Prophet other than the Qur'an are nothing

but the repeatedly revealed scriptures bestowed on him previously!

We shall now, even before the disclosure of a magnificent distinction of the holy Prophet, strive to bring to light another dazzling and awesome attribute of the glorious Book he has himself brought with him, which constitutes the essence of our current investigation:

180) *These are* those Signs of the Book and of a Clear Qur'an. The disbelievers shall time and again wish that they had been from among the believers. Leave them *too* to feast and revel, muddled by hope; they shall certainly come to know in a while. Each of the habitations we have destroyed had a known Book. None of the people used to exceed their term or fall behind it. And they only said *to their respective messengers*, "O you to whom the Reminder has been sent down, you are surely possessed!"<sup>298</sup>

Note that in the same way as the current Qur'an has been declared under statement no. 130 through '*These are* those Signs of the Clear Book' to have been merely one of the many Signs brought out from the Parent Book and revealed upon the present man, here too this very message is being given through '*These are* those Signs of the Book and of a Clear Qur'an' to make a further declaration that all these Signs have emanated from just one single Clear Qur'an that has in turn been brought out from the Parent Book. This is the reason why the repeated longing for faith by the disbelievers, i.e. at the time of each of their deaths, is being put across through 'The disbelievers shall time and again wish that they had been from among the believers,' and also this true nature of the Qur'an itself is once again stated through 'they shall certainly come to know in a while' that it would be revealed to them only after a period of time. So, this very intense desire and lamenting of the disbelievers has been articulated at another occasion thus:

180.1) Until when death approaches to one of them, he will say, "My Lord, send me back again, so that I may do righteous deeds in what I have left behind..."<sup>299</sup>

It is, thus, clear in this precise context of the multiple creations of man and the repeated revelations of the Qur'an that the entire discussion here is being carried out in a universal framework. This is the reason why this meaning is further being reinforced through 'Each of the habitations we have destroyed had a known Book' subsequently that virtually all the habitations or the earths



of the universe destroyed through the all-enveloping punishments had a known divine Book. Note that we have taken the original *kitab* to mean the 'Book' in its literal sense here, as the present context suggests this very meaning alone. Besides, it finds further support from another similar statement too:

180.2) Each of the habitations we have destroyed had warners.<sup>300</sup>

It is now obvious that these warners or messengers were also accompanied by the revealed books. In this way, if merely the messengers have been mentioned in this latter verse, the books they had brought with them have been referred in the verse under discussion. It can now be pondered that this statement is mysteriously silent concerning the real identity of these books. However, the subsequent verse 'And they only said to their respective messengers, "O you to whom the Reminder has been sent down, you are surely possessed!"' is stunningly revealing that very mystery. In fact, this verse is the continuation of a well-organized talk being carried out in all the previous verses of this chapter and particularly the immediately preceding two of them concerning the creation and elimination of a multitude of human races on a universal scale. This very well suggests that those who are stated in the immediately preceding verse to have neither exceeded nor fallen behind their respective terms are the ones who are being said to have accused their messengers of possession here. This statement, therefore, belongs to the people who are continuously being given existence and obliterated in the habitations across the length and breadth of the universe. This in turn implies that 'the Reminder' here has only been used as a substitute for 'a known Book' in order to convey that it has been bestowed on each and every one of those previously extinct races of the universe too. Thus, the Qur'an is such a glorious Book that is revealed in each of the earths of the universe!! That is, if it has been conveyed through 'For each period is a Book' under statement no. 118.3 that there would be a separate Qur'an for every epoch, it is being put forth here that for every place too there would be a different Qur'an. In other words, for each and every one of the human races given existence throughout the universe there would be a distinct Qur'an. And it is in order to emphasize these multiple revelations of the Reminder even further that an unequivocal declaration of 'Indeed, it is we who have repeatedly sent down the Reminder,

and we shall preserve it. We have, without a doubt, sent *it* before you among the groups of the ancients too. But never came to them *with it* a messenger whom they didn't mock at' has again been brought in subsequently, which we have already dealt with under statement no. 111. It can, thus, be noticed as to how accurate and straightforward manner in which these statements of 'Indeed, it is we who have repeatedly sent down the Reminder,' 'We have, without a doubt, sent *it* before you among the groups of the ancients too,' and 'But never came to them *with it* a messenger whom they didn't mock at' are corresponding to 'These are those Signs of the Book and of a Clear Qur'an,' 'Each of the habitations we have destroyed had a known Book,' and 'And they only said to their respective messengers, "O you to whom the Reminder has been sent down, you are surely possessed!"' respectively.

Furthermore, for the repeated revelations of this very Reminder merely upon the present man in this very universal context, keep in view the earlier statements of 'Whenever a Fresh Reminder has come to them from the compassionate Lord, they have always turned aside from it' and 'Whenever a Fresh Reminder has come to them from their Lord, they have always listened to it playfully,' which we have detailed under statement nos. 97 and 98 respectively. And if this former statement was immediately followed by the statement of 'The tales of what they have been mocking at would come to them in a while' to make another declaration that the true nature of this Reminder would only be disclosed to humanity only after a period of time, the same message is being conveyed here too through 'they shall certainly come to know in a while.' This uniformity of expression is, thus, only suggestive of the consistency in their denotation. In this fashion, all the initial thirteen verses of the current chapter no. 15 are making an extremely coherent and moving depiction of the multiple creations of man and the repeated revelations of the Qur'an. It can very well be inferred from it that the real objective behind the drawing out of the different Signs or Qur'ans from the Parent Book as mentioned in the very first verse here is being explained in detail in the subsequent twelve verses. Consider now the following five more statements that strengthen this contention even further:

181) The Almighty has created the skies and the earths truthfully; surely in that is a great sign for those who believe. Recite the Book that has been



sent down to you, and establish prayer; indeed prayer forbids indecency and dishonor. The remembrance of the Almighty is the greatest, and he knows whatever you do. Argue with the People of the Book, save for the wrongdoers among them, only in the fairer manner, and say, "We have reposed our faith in that which has been sent down to us and sent down to you too; our God and your God is one, and it is to him that we submit ourselves." Likewise, we have sent down the Book to you *too*. So those to whom we have given the Book *previously too* believe in it, and there are those from among these too who shall believe in it; it is only the disbelievers who deny our Signs. You were neither reading any book before this, nor were writing one with your hand, otherwise the followers of falsehood would have doubted. Rather, it is itself Clear Signs in the breasts of those who have been given the Knowledge; it is only the wrongdoers who deny our Signs. They say, "Why have the signs not sent down upon him from his Lord?" Say, "The Signs are with the Almighty alone, and I am merely a plain warner." Doesn't it suffice them that we have sent down to you the Book that was being recited to them? Surely in that are a mercy and an admonition to a people who believe. Say, "Suffice is the Almighty as witness between me and you; he knows what is in the skies and the earths..."<sup>301</sup>

It is plainly evident from this statement that the great sign that is being said in the first verse to exist in the skies and the earths is precisely the same that is reported in the last verse to be in the divine knowledge. It can, thus, very well be inferred from it that the intervening seven verses are describing this very 'universal sign.' Consider now statement no. 155 where exactly these seven verses are establishing the repeated revelations of the Qur'an only upon the present human race. That is to say that if a people are made to inherit and bear it in one life, they are subsequently made to be born in its inheritance of others on a continuous basis. There is, for instance, a mention here of merely one current and one immediately preceding one of its inheritors, and still others could also be presumed upon them. As a result, the great sign of the divinity that exists all through the seven skies and the earths is the glorious Qur'an itself. That is to say that in the same way as man is given existence and tested all through the seven skies, the Qur'an too is being revealed through the continuous change in its inheritance everywhere.

182) Neither the disbeliever from among the People of the Book nor the idolaters like that any good should repeatedly be sent down upon you from your Lord, whereas the Almighty chooses whom he likes for his mercy, and he is the master of the highest bounty. Whichever Sign we abrogate or cause it to be forgotten, we replace it with a better or a similar one. Do you not know that the Almighty is powerful over everything? Do you not know that to the Almighty belongs the kingdom of the skies and the earths, and that you shall neither have any friend nor helper against him?<sup>302</sup>

The true import of these verses too is an extremely contentious one right from the earliest period itself. The moot point here is as to what might the word '*a'yah*,' which we have translated as 'Sign,' be denoting? Those of whom who have considered it to be 'the Qur'anic verses' had to resort to various figurative interpretations in arriving at the right import of their abrogation or causing them to be forgotten. And those of whom who have taken it to mean 'the revealed Books' too have fell short of convincingly explaining the statement of their slipping from our memory.

Let us now take note of the context and the sequence of the present talk. By initiating this discussion four verses earlier, if the fact of the previous revelations of the Qur'an was conveyed through 'When there has come to them a messenger from the Almighty confirming that which had been with them,' the conduct of those who had reposed their faith in those earlier revelations and are also present in the current human race too is again being disclosed subsequently through 'and if you follow their desires even after the Knowledge has come to you' and 'Those to whom we have given the Book *previously too* do recite it as it should be; it is only they who believe in it,' which we have already dealt with in detail in statement nos. 145 and 136 respectively. Besides, let us also recall statement no. 121, wherein the lesson of the multiple revelations of the Qur'an was given through another closely-resembling expression of 'When we have replaced one Sign with another—the Almighty knows very well what he is repeatedly revealing—they say that it is only you who have forged it.' And let us bear in mind yet again at this stage that our previous discussion has made it clear that the Qur'an considers the other revealed scriptures too besides itself to be the 'Signs.'

On account of these contentions, and together with this specific context, it can very safely be concluded now that '*a'yah*' here denotes only the revealed



Books. This is the reason why these Books are reported to be revealed repeatedly too to further state that whenever one of them is sent down upon the believers, the disbelievers and the idolaters always dislike it. Here again the revealed Books are of two types: the abrogated ones, whose abrogation is within our knowledge, like the Torah, the Gospel, the Psalms etc., and the others that have been caused to be forgotten from the human memory, like the previous revelations of the Qur'an. Besides, those of the Books that have been abrogated have been replaced today by a better one in the form of the present Qur'an, and those that have been caused to be forgotten from the human memory too have been substituted with a similar one again in the form of a fresh Qur'an. And these are the very realities that are being endeavored to bring to light through the statement 'Whichever Sign we abrogate or cause it to be forgotten, we replace it with a better or a similar one.' Thus, a logical sequence is established between 'we abrogate' and 'we replace it with a better' and between 'cause it to be forgotten' and 'replace with a similar one.' This elucidation is receiving a further emphasis through the subsequent passage of 'Do you not know that the Almighty is powerful over everything?' too, as this sort of a glorious statement befits only the occasion of the disclosure of a grand sign of the divine providence, rather than merely the cancellation or revoking of a few verses of the Qur'an from here and there.

There is yet another argument in support of our present contention, and it is the last verse of the current statement 'Do you not know that to the Almighty belongs the kingdom of the skies and the earths,' which is disclosing the reason behind this elaborate approach. This clearly suggests that the current well-entrenched strategy of the abrogation of the revealed Books or causing them to be forgotten and replacing them with better or similar ones is being carried out in view of the divine kingdom encompassing all the seven skies and all the earths contained in them. That is, they are being revealed all through the universe in the form of ever newer and fresher divine Signs.

It can now be pondered as to how consistent and mutually interpreting the current unequivocal statement of keeping the reality of the multiple revelations of the Qur'an upon the present man concealed from him by making him to forget it and the previous statements of 'This is that Book' and 'These are those Signs of the Clear Book.' It can, thus, be inferred from it that the fact of the previous revelations of the Qur'an upon us underlying our subcon-

scious after we have been made to forget it consequent to our previous deaths is once again being awakened through these latter statements. Furthermore, this verse is another significant and extremely clear statement concerning the concealment from us of all our previous lives too.

183) The repeated revelations of the Book is from the Almighty, the exalted in power, full of wisdom. We have created the skies and the earths and that which exists in between only with a purpose and for a determined term, whereas those who disbelieve are turning away from that they are warned with.<sup>303</sup>

These verses precede those contained in statement no. 160. It is very much obvious from this statement that the detailed account given there concerning the previous repeated revelations of the Qur'an upon the disbelievers and their constant rejection of it is initially being recapped and the sphere of these revelations too is determined here. So, after initiating this discussion through the repeated revelations of the Qur'an in the first verse, it is being conveyed subsequently through the mention of two of the glorious attributes of the Almighty of 'the exalted in power' and 'full of wisdom' that the present strategy of the multiple creations of man and the repeated revelations of the Qur'an upon him has been founded upon a wise scheme of an extremely powerful Being. Then, the last phrase of 'whereas those who disbelieve are turning away from that they are warned with' is making an assertion that in spite of this outstanding reality of this glorious Book, the disbelievers are turning aside from it. Now, the statement of 'We have created the skies and the earths and that which exists in between only with a purpose and for a determined term' as a parenthetical expression right in the middle this extremely coherent discussion concerning the Qur'an only goes to prove that the divine purpose behind the creation of the skies and the earths is exactly the same that underlies the multiple creations of man and the repeated revelations of the Qur'an upon him. Thus, another significant argument is obtained concerning the repeated revelations of the Qur'an all through the universe.

184) This is our argument, which we have given to Abraham against his people. We raise in degrees whom we please; surely your Lord is all-wise, all-knowing. We bestowed upon him Isaac and Jacob too: we have guided



them all. And we have guided Noah earlier, and, among his progeny, David, Solomon, Job, Joseph, Moses, and Aaron as well: so do we reward the good-doers. And Zachariah, John, Jesus, and Elias too: all are the righteous. And Ishmael, Elisha, Jonah, and Lot too: we have favored all of them over all the worlds. And *we have favored* some of their fathers, offspring, and brothers too; we have chosen them and guided them to the right path. This the guidance of the Almighty, with which he guides whomsoever he wishes from his servants. Had they associated any one with him, then all of their deeds would have been futile to them. These are the ones whom we have given the Book, the judgment, and the prophethood; so if these disbelieve in them, we have entrusted them to a people who do not disbelieve in them. These are the ones whom the Almighty has guided; so follow their guidance. Say, "I am not asking from you any remuneration for it; this is no less than a Reminder to all the worlds."<sup>304</sup>

A total of 18 prophets find a mention here, and they are all reported to have been bestowed with the divine guidance as well. The passage 'we have favored all of them over all the worlds' is spelling out another attribute concerning them that they haven't only been favored over our present world, but over all the worlds and the entire universe too. Remember, we have already very convincingly established under statement no. 77 that the term 'all the worlds' denotes all the seven skies and all the earths existing in them. Besides, some of the fathers, children, and brothers of these prophets too have been included in this universal favor, because these previously-mentioned prophets have also been joined together with the subsequent phrase 'And some of their fathers, offspring, and brothers too' by means of the conjunction 'and.' And the phrase 'we have chosen them' is disclosing a third feature of these prophets and their nearest and dearest ones that they have been selected too. Now, as to what could be meant by this selection in this universal context is being explained through 'These are the ones whom we have given the Book, the judgment, and the prophethood' that they have all been bestowed with all these three things. Then, by masking the real identity of the book given to these prophets once again, the current disbelievers of the Qur'an too are considered through the immediately subsequent phrase of 'so if these disbelieve in them' to be disbelieving in that very book already bestowed upon those prophets. This very clearly suggests that all these prophets have also

been given the Qur'an previously. This is the reason why the holy Prophet is also being advised to follow the guidance given to these earlier prophets, which automatically resolves the long-standing puzzle as to what could be the true import of him following the guidance given to those inferior in rank to him. Thus, the Qur'an is such a book which is regularly given to innumerable such prophets all through the universe. And if there remain any misgiving concerning this, that too is being removed in extremely unequivocal terms through the subsequent statement of 'I am not asking from you any remuneration for it; this is no less than a Reminder to all the worlds' by making the pronoun 'it' designate merely the first of the three things of 'the Book, the judgment, and the prophethood.' Furthermore, in order to serve as an example, Prophet Moses, from among these prophets, is also stated through the immediately subsequent two verses to have brought this Book to the current humanity previously, which we have dealt with in statement no. 163.

Remember, only those of the prophets find a mention here which we are familiar with in the context of the current human race. The list would have been an extremely extensive one, otherwise. Besides, the bestowal of prophethood and the Qur'an upon many of the immediate relatives of these prophets in the universal context too is quite in agreement with our ongoing discussion that there exist in the present human race such of the former prophets who have only been given ordinary lives sans prophethood.

Furthermore, the current statement of 'so if these disbelieve in them, we have entrusted them to a people who do not disbelieve in them' bears another notable insight for us. When the present talk concerns the repeated revelations of the Qur'an all through the universe, it could very well be inferred from it that the holy Prophet is being informed through this assertion that the disbelief in it of the current disbelievers is of no consequence to the Almighty, as it has already been entrusted to another people who do not show such an antagonistic behavior towards it. We also find another of such declarations in the following words:

184.1) The Book which we have revealed to you is the Truth, confirming that which preceded it. Indeed, the Almighty is well aware and quite insightful of his servants. Thereafter, we have given the Book in inheritance to some of our selected servants. So, among them are those who wrong their own souls, there are also those who follow a middle path,



them all. And we have guided Noah earlier, and, among his progeny, David, Solomon, Job, Joseph, Moses, and Aaron as well: so do we reward the good-doers. And Zachariah, John, Jesus, and Elias too: all are the righteous. And Ishmael, Elisha, Jonah, and Lot too: we have favored all of them over all the worlds. And *we have favored* some of their fathers, offspring, and brothers too; we have chosen them and guided them to the right path. This the guidance of the Almighty, with which he guides whomsoever he wishes from his servants. Had they associated any one with him, then all of their deeds would have been futile to them. These are the ones whom we have given the Book, the judgment, and the prophethood; so if these disbelieve in them, we have entrusted them to a people who do not disbelieve in them. These are the ones whom the Almighty has guided; so follow their guidance. Say, "I am not asking from you any remuneration for it; this is no less than a Reminder to all the worlds."<sup>304</sup>

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184.1) The Book which we have revealed to you is the Truth, confirming that which preceded it. Indeed, the Almighty is well aware and quite insightful of his servants. Thereafter, we have given the Book in inheritance to some of our selected servants. So, among them are those who wrong their own souls, there are also those who follow a middle path,



and there are also those who are the foremost in good deeds by the leave of the Almighty. That is the great blessing.<sup>305</sup>

It can be observed that here too the conversation is taking place in the context of the previous revelations of the Qur'an through the phrase 'confirming that which preceded it.' A conclusion can, thus, be drawn from it that the subsequent statement of 'Thereafter, we have given the Book in inheritance to some of our selected servants' is disclosing the people of various hues who have been made to inherit it right after its present bearers. And from this assertion of the simultaneous existence of various other bearers of the Qur'an besides those of our current human race the gigantic number of earths and the human races given existence in them through out the length and breadth of the universe could be contemplated upon. Thus, the human races given existence in the universe are so abundant and copious that it is not at all possible for the Qur'an to be given to each of them only after the extinction of the previously given races. For a faint visualization of this profusion of the extraterrestrials in the universe, the earlier affirmations of 'Whosoever is in the skies and the earths shall appear before the Merciful as a servant. Indeed, he has surrounded them and counted them thoroughly' and 'The skies are close to splitting asunder *due to the weight* from above them' should once again be recalled, which have been dealt with under statement nos. 14 and 17 respectively. Furthermore, it should also be kept in mind at this stage that the inheritance here concerns the Parent Book, rather than any of its offshoots. Thus, when its different offshoots are simultaneously being sent down upon the various races of the universe, every subsequent race in this sequence can only be considered as the inheritor of its preceding one, and it may not absolutely be necessary for its previous bearers to be made extinct before the subsequent ones.

185) This is no less than a Reminder to all the worlds. You shall certainly come to know the truth of it in a while. *In reality*, this Book has been repeatedly revealed by the Almighty, the exalted in power, full of wisdom.<sup>306</sup>

The same previous declaration of 'This is no less than a Reminder to all the worlds' concerning the Qur'an has been repeated here too. This once again shows that the Qur'an is a reminder of not only the current human race,

but those of all the other ones given existence through out the length and breadth of the universe as well. That is to say that each and every one of them has already been given this Book previously itself, and it does exist in their subconscious presently too, which is being stirred up through 'Reminder' today. And in order to reinforce this declaration even further, and to demonstrate as to how could this be possible, the statement of 'this Book has been repeatedly revealed by the Almighty, the exalted in power, full of wisdom' is also being advanced subsequently.

Now, as the divine intention had been to disclose this glorious reality concerning the Qur'an to man in the light of his own knowledge, the declaration of 'You shall certainly come to know the truth of it in a while' is once again being repeated here too. It can, thus, be pondered if it isn't the very occasion with which humanity had been divinely assured in such clear terms here! These verses are, thus, comprehensively summarizing all our previous discussion contained in this book. In the other words, it is only the interpretation of these two verses that has been carried out all through previously. Besides, these verses are also articulating the divine wisdom and prudence behind keeping all the realities concerning the abundance of the extraterrestrial earths, the multiple live and dead phases of each one of them, the different human races given existence in them, their bestowal of multiple and varied lives etc. hitherto concealed from us that it was, in reality, intended to reveal upon us the universal character of the Qur'an and its previous revelations upon each and every one of us in a marvelous fashion. The divine design in this regard was that man should himself initially gather irrefutable rational and intellectual and experimental and observational arguments concerning the inconceivable expanse of the universe, its extraordinary ancientness, the profusion of earths in it, and the existence of the basic ingredients of past life on some of the neighboring ones, and, by considering himself not to be the lone inheritor of the universe, frantically venture out exploring the extraterrestrial civilizations, and it is only then should all these realities bare themselves and the greatest intellectual marvel of the Qur'an is unveiled upon him. That is, the divine intention in this regard was to disclose such concealed realities as the multiple creations of man and the repeated revelations of the Qur'an upon him in the light of his own knowledge and perception so that he should be robbed of all the means to dispute or discredit



them, and that each of the noble and righteous souls present in the current human race is obliged to testify to the existence of God, his Oneness, Creativity, Nourishment, and Divinity, and bow in adoration before him:

185.1) Say: "Praise belongs to the Almighty alone. Soon shall he reveal to you his signs, and you would certainly recognize them."<sup>307</sup>

185.2) Soon shall we reveal to them our signs in the environs of the earth and the skies and in their own lives until it becomes manifest to them that this is the truth. Isn't it enough for your Lord to be witness over everything?<sup>308</sup>

Both of these verses have already been dealt with under statement nos. 7 & 7.1 respectively. It is very much clear now that the original Arabic term *aafaaq* used in this latter verse to denote the environs of the earth and the skies also includes the creatures given existence in these extraterrestrial earths and also the multiple revelations of the Qur'an upon them all too. Furthermore, the phrase 'in their own lives' is also indicative and very much inclusive of the multiple lives of the man as well. Thus, the current verse is making another significant assertion concerning the concealment of the multiplicity of the lives of man from the predecessors. We find another such, and still clearer, statement in this regard in the following words:

185.3) Every soul shall taste death, thereafter we shall severely test you by evil and by good, and thereafter you shall be returned to us. When the disbelievers look at you, they only make a mockery of you saying, "Is this the one who mentions your gods?" Yet in the remembrance of the Merciful they disbelieve. Man has been created of haste. I shall definitely show you my signs, so ask me not to hasten.<sup>309</sup>

The first of these verses has already been dealt with under statement no. 55 to establish the multiple and diverse forms of life of man. This is the reason why this very reality is once again being considered in the last verse to be a sign of the divine providence that would be revealed upon man only after a while. Besides, consider also the unity of expression between both of these declarations, which emphasizes this meaning even further.

Time has, thus, come now for the revelation of a glorious and an exalted distinction enjoyed by the holy Prophet in the current context, which is as follows:

186) Blessed is He who repeatedly sent down the Criterion upon his servant, that he may be a warner to all the worlds; to whom belongs the kingdom of the skies and the earths...<sup>310</sup>

'Criterion' and 'servant' denote the Qur'an and the holy Prophet respectively here. Thus, the phrase 'that he may be a warner to all the worlds' very clearly conveys that the current statement of the multiple revelations of the Qur'an upon the holy Prophet is being made in the context of all the worlds. That is to say that the Qur'an is being sent down upon him periodically in order that he may warn with it in all the seven skies! Even though 'all the worlds' itself is carrying in it the meaning of all the seven skies and all the earths contained in them, the subsequent phrase of 'to whom belongs the kingdom of the skies and the earths' is emphasizing this meaning even further. Remember, this latter phrase is appearing in apposition to the previous 'who.' This is as if it is being said:

"Blessed is He, to whom belongs the kingdom of the skies and the earths, who repeatedly sent down the Criterion upon his servant, that he may be a warner to them all."

Thus, in the very sequence in which each and every human being is provided with multiple lives in accordance with their predestined *Shir'a* (path) and *minhaj* (clear path) and *Mustaqar* (place of longer dwelling) and *mustawda* (place of shorter dwelling), the holy Prophet too is bestowed with prophethood accordingly to be a warner to all the worlds. It should also be born in mind at this stage that statement no. 184 too speaks of the other prophets as well having been favored above all the worlds and also provided with the Qur'an. However, the singularity of mention and the special pride of place being accorded to the holy Prophet here isn't to be found concerning any other prophet anywhere in the Qur'an. This is the reason why he has at another place been conferred with yet another epithet thus:

186.1) We have only sent you as a mercy to all the worlds.<sup>311</sup>

Now, before concluding this chapter, this humble writer wishes to share with the esteemed readers a couple of the most terrifying divine warnings that have left deep imprints upon him and have extraordinarily strengthened his resolve in his current endeavor:



187) Indeed, those who conceal the Book sent down by the Almighty for a small gain are not swallowing in their bellies anything other than the fire. The Almighty shall neither speak to them on the Day of Judgment nor purify them, and there shall also be a painful punishment to them. Those are the ones who have bought error at the expense of guidance and punishment at the expense of forgiveness; how contented are they upon the Fire! This is because the Almighty has sent down the truthful Book repeatedly, and those who dispute the Book are in far away (i.e., ancient) opposition to it.<sup>312</sup>

It is very much obvious from the first verse here that the statement of concealment pertains to the whole book, rather than merely a part of it. However, the identities of this book as well as those indulging in its concealment have ostensibly been obscured. Nevertheless, the phrase 'This is because the Almighty has sent down the truthful Book repeatedly' in the last verse is very meaningfully uncovering the true identity of this book that it is in reality none other than the repeatedly revealed Qur'an itself. And it is in order to emphasize this message even further that the phrase 'those who dispute the Book are in far away opposition' is also being advanced. Thus, the phrase 'those who conceal the Book sent down by the Almighty' is indicative of only the previously revealed Qur'ans kept obscured from us until now. Accordingly, a warning is being extended with it that even after the disclosure of the reality of the multiplicity of the revelations of the Qur'an those who think it expedient to hold this information back from the masses owing to some worldly apprehensions "for a small gain," they are in reality committing the offence of concealing the Book itself, and whose abode in the Hereafter would be nothing but the Hell! And this is not the end of it. The concluding phrase of 'those who dispute the Book are in far away opposition' is making another assertion that those would be the ones whose current behavior is only indicative of their previous and age-old opposition to the divine Book too!!

188) Indeed, those who conceal the Clear Signs and guidance sent down by us even after we have detailed it in the Book for mankind, they are the ones cursed by the Almighty and by the cursers. Except for those who repent, reform themselves, and enlighten *the truth*; they are the ones whom I shall forgive, for I am the forgiving, the merciful. But those who

disbelieve, and die while disbelieving; they are the ones upon whom shall be the curse of the Almighty, the angles, and the whole mankind. They shall abide therein forever: the punishment shall neither be eased to them, nor shall they be provided with any respite.<sup>313</sup>

These verses are so general in their import that they defy any particular narrative of their revelation. Many of the predecessor exegetes too have argued similarly from them. It can, thus, be observed as to how clearly the statement of 'Indeed, those who conceal the Book sent down by the Almighty' in the previous statement is being interpreted through 'Indeed, those who conceal the Clear Signs and guidance sent down by us' in the current one, which reinforces the previous statement even further. And by associating the first verse here with the third one in the context of curse, those indulging in this concealment are made to stand in the line of the disbelievers themselves worthy of the curse of the Almighty, angles, and all the people too!



## 6

### The Concluding Chapter

When man has to lead his predestined lives all through the seven skies, and he has led many of them in different parts or earths of the universe by now, a pertinent question arises as to the time from when this exercise of creation and testing is in force, and as to the number lives he has already been bestowed with. We shall once again take recourse to the Qur'an itself in finding credible answers to these questions too:

189) Don't the disbelievers observe that the skies and the earths were bound together before we split them, and made every living thing from water? Will they not believe then? We have placed stabilizers on the earths lest they should shake with them, and have made broad paths in them in order that they may be guided.<sup>314</sup>

It is very much obvious from the phrase 'the skies and the earths were bound together' that a depiction is being made here of the primeval matter from which the present skies and all the heavenly bodies contained in them have emanated. Thus, an extremely significant inference could be found from the immediately subsequent phrase of 'and made every living thing from water' that life too might have been initiated in the universe soon after its creation. Furthermore, the later phrase 'lest they should shake with them,' where the pronoun 'them' has been made to indicate the disbelievers in the first verse, is making another impressive suggestion that this life concerns that of the humans themselves. The subsequent specification of 'broad paths' too,



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which we have dealt with under statement no. 85, reinforces this contention even further, as it entails that these broad human paths have been created in the skies at the time of their very own creation. Besides, statement no. 80 should also be recalled at this stage, which is providing another significant insight through the passage 'It is he who has created the skies and the earths in six days, and then ascended the Throne. He knows whosoever is entering the earths and whosoever is getting out of them, and whosoever is descending from the skies and whosoever is ascending in them; wherever you may be he is with you' that the act of gathering of humans between the skies had commenced immediately after the creation of the natural phenomena. Moreover, when the entire universe has been created for the specific purpose of testing of the man in it, it necessarily follows from it that human creation should commence in it immediately after its own creation. We have already repeatedly witnessed in varied phraseology in our previous discussion that each of the live phases of every earth of the universe commences with the origination of a new human race on it, which lends further credence to our present contention. Thus, the following verse too is underlining this very reality with recourse to yet another and comparatively clearer turn of phrase:

190) The number of months with the Almighty in his Book is twelve since the day he created the skies and the earths; of them four are sacred...<sup>315</sup>

Man has, since the ancient past, classified time into three fundamentally categories of day, month, and year. The occurrence of the days and the years is only but natural, and man has no influence over it in any way. The days materialize due to the rotation of the Earth around its axis, and the years, due to its revolution in its orbit. They keep following their course regularly even if man doesn't wish or he doesn't exist on it altogether, such as Venus, Mars, etc. today. Months are, however, purely the outcome of the civilizational necessities of man. This reality is very much obvious concerning the months of the solar calendar. Had he so desired, he wouldn't have adopted this particular classification at all, and would have contented with that of the days and the years alone. And as far as the months of the lunar calendar are concerned (remember, the specification of the sacred months here is clearly conveying the fact that it is only this latter type of months that are the subject matter of the present discussion), they too owe their existence to the revolution

of the Moon around the Earth, yet the limitation of merely twelve months for an year is again wholly the result of human endeavor. Man would have easily adopted his lunar year to be consisting of eleven or thirteen months too, otherwise. This clearly establishes that the classification of time in months is wholly the product of human enterprise. Thus, the specification of the year to be consisting of precisely twelve months since the creation of the universe is a making a direct and an extremely meaningful implication that man continues to exist in it since then. It can also be inferred from it that each and every earth of the universe possesses this very classification of time. Besides, the specification of 'with the Almighty' here is making another noteworthy assertion that even though this classification is the result of human labor, however it is only gifted and natural in reality. Thus, in the same way as the existence of earths through the mere existence of moons, and the existence of suns through the mere existence of earths was significantly argued upon previously, here too with the mere mention of months, the existence of their inventor, the man, is very powerfully being contended all through the universe.

Now, when man is continuously being given existence in the universe since the time of its own creation, a question that begs our answer would be as to when the universe itself was brought into being, and as to how many lives has man already been bestowed with, and at what rate? It should particularly be noted at this moment that the current human race is in existence on the Earth merely for the past few thousand years, whereas the estimated ages of the Earth and the Sun are at least 4.6 and 5.5 billion years respectively. The universe itself is assumed to be around 10 to 20 or, according to the latest estimates, approximately 14.2 billion years old. Remember, these assumptions aren't merely based upon pure conjecture like the ancient philosophy, but are founded upon practical and observational facts and the scientific estimations based thereupon. The specification of the least ages concerning them has been made because science has only been able to gather evidence which points merely to such ages. If it is able to find in the future any evidence indicating an older date, then their respective ages could well change accordingly. Thus, we will now take up the rate of the multiple creations of man even before the number of lives he has already been bestowed with, as the former acts as the precursor to determining the latter and also establishing



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the approximate age of the universe too. The Qur'an says:

191) As for those in whose hearts was sickness, to them this chapter has added abomination to their own abomination, and they have died in the state of disbelief. Do they not see that they are tested each year once or twice? Yet they neither repent nor do they remember.<sup>316</sup>

The first of these verses is expressing the death of those disbelievers who bear sickness in their hearts, whereas, by making the pronoun 'they' in the second verse to designate these very dead disbelievers, it is being conveyed that they are also being tested once or twice every year. Remember, this very lesson of the multiple creations of man and his repeated testing has been given earlier too under statement nos. 55 and 57 with recourse to similar expressions of 'Every soul shall taste death, thereafter we shall severely test you by evil and by good' and 'Indeed, we have destroyed the habitations surrounding you, thereafter changed the signs to them repeatedly that they might turn back' respectively. This shows that these precise multiple lives of man are the subject matter of discussion once again here too. Now, as regards the identity of the year of this testing is concerned, it has been defined at another occasion thus:

191.1) They ask you to hasten the punishment, whereas the Almighty shall never go back on his promise. Indeed, a day with your Lord is comparable to a thousand years of your own counting.<sup>317</sup>

Here too the punishment of annihilation to be meted out to the disbelievers is the subject matter of discussion. Now, when one godly day equals one thousand worldly years, his year is as good as the worldly 365,000 years. Thus, the current statement is making an extremely obvious statement that the Almighty bestows man with life and tests him once or twice according to his own year or the worldly 365,000 years. This makes it very clear that man is not accorded all of his lives one after the other ceaselessly similar to the alien concept of the incarnation of spirits, but there exists considerable period of time between every two of them, during which the events of sepulcher are administered to him. This is the reason why the phrases of 'Yet they neither repent' and 'nor do they remember' are also subsequently being reiterated once again, to state that even after having been provided with so many lives, the disbelievers of one life would remain addicted to their hostile behavior

ever, and also the events of their previous lives would be kept concealed from their memories for the time being. In further support of this contention, the earlier statements of 'No habitation which we had destroyed before them came to believe *thereafter*. So, how can they believe?' and 'We shall raise those who have belied our signs step by step without even them realizing it. I continue to give them respite; indeed, my scheme is deep-rooted,' which we have dealt with under statement nos. 56 and 82 respectively, should also be recalled once again.

192) Indeed, Noah cried to us; and how excellent were we to answer *him*! We saved him and his people from the great affliction, made only his progeny to survive, and left upon him among others too. *That is*, peace be upon Noah among all the worlds. So do we recompense the good-doers.<sup>318</sup>

The point in contention here is the phrase 'left upon him among others too,' which states the leaving upon Prophet Noah of something even after his death. But, the true identity of the thing left upon him has deliberately been omitted. However, the very next verse 'Peace be upon Noah among all the worlds' is revealing this omission in an extremely marvelous fashion that it is, in reality, the supplication of peace to be made upon him all through the universe. It can now be pondered if he hadn't been given existence all through the universe, then how could this supplication be made upon him there as well. Have we ever made any such supplication concerning the prophets of the other earths? In fact, humans of every earth remain conversant with merely the prophets of their own race and would be obliged to making this supplication concerning only them. It can very well be inferred from it, thus, that the selection of Prophet Noah in the context of the entire universe is being stated here too in the same manner in which another statement has already been made concerning the same through 'The Almighty has chosen Adam, Noah, the house of Abraham, and the house of Imran above all the worlds,' which we have dealt with under statement no. 77. Thus, this latter statement finds another significant argument in its support in the form of the current statement.

Likewise, a total of seven more of the prophets, i.e., Prophets Abraham, Moses, Aaron, Elias, Isaac, Lot, and Jonah, too find a mention subsequently one after the other here. And the current statement of 'left upon him among



others too' has constantly been repeated after each of the first four of them as well. Contrary to the current instance, however, the specification of 'among all the worlds' has very meaningfully been omitted at all these places. Besides, Prophet Isaac finds just a cursory mention after Prophet Abraham, and so does Prophet Lot at number six. It appears from it that the current phraseology has deliberately been adopted in order to introduce an apparent disruption in an extremely coherent discussion concerning all of these seven prophets in the universal context and to check the premature materialization of the desired meaning. This is because the selection and favoring of all the remaining prophets besides Prophet Noah in this very universal context has also been mentioned at another place with recourse to a different turn of phrase, which we have already dealt with under statement no. 184:

192.1) This is our argument, which we have given to Abraham against his people. We raise in degrees whom we please; surely your Lord is all-wise, all-knowing. We bestowed upon him Isaac and Jacob too: we have guided them all. And before him, we have guided Noah, and, among his progeny, David, Solomon, Job, Joseph, Moses, and Aaron as well: so do we reward the good-doers. And Zachariah, John, Jesus, and Elias too: all are the righteous. And Ishmael, Elisha, Jonah, and Lot too: we have favored all of them over all the worlds.<sup>319</sup>

Then, by maintaining the same continuity and resorting to an apparent omission once again, another statement of 'we have sent him to a hundred thousand or more' is being made in verse no. 147 of this very chapter concerning the seventh of these prophets, Prophet Jonah. That is, the number to which he had been sent has clearly been spelt out to be a hundred thousand or more, whereas the identity of that to which this number pertains has completely been omitted. Thus, when it is also kept in mind at this stage that the ongoing discussion concerning the above prophets in this universal context is being concluded through the current verse, and that Prophet Jonah too is included in the above quoted verse among the prophets who have been favored over all the worlds, there would remain no scope for any difficulty in ascertaining this omission that it is none other than different nations of the universe. That is to say that he has already been bestowed with prophethood and sent among a hundred thousand or more different nations of the universe

until now!! It, thus, suggests beyond reasonable doubt now that it is merely for the disclosure of this solitary reality that recourse has been taken to such a long prelude consisting of the preceding 72 verses.

It should particularly be noted here that this figure is indicative only of the prophethoods of Prophet Jonah, and doesn't include in it his other ordinary lives. Thus, when the ratio of both these types of lives is kept at a similar rate, then a minimum of two hundred thousand of his lives get established. In this way, as none of the individuals has been discriminated against in the number of lives he has been bestowed with, the same number of lives is proved concerning all the remaining prophets and all the other humans as well. Now, when the just established maximum of two lives for each of the humans in every 365,000 years is taken into account, then the least age of the universe comes to a minimum of (200,000 lives multiplied by 182,500 years) 36.5 billion years. And when a minimum of one life is taken for the same period, then this figure would stand at 73 billion years, i.e., 2 to 4 times still greater than the current scientific estimations. This suggests that there exists a wider scope for the scientific enquiry still, to which conforms the Qur'anic statement of 'You have been bestowed with only a little knowledge.'

Thus, when man has already been provided with a minimum of 200,000 lives as of today; he is currently undergoing recreation and testing in only the nearest of the skies; it is not known as to how many more of the lives he has to lead here; and there still remain six more of the skies for the testing, it could very well be inferred from it that the number of lives he has already been bestowed with isn't even a seventh of the total destined for him, as it has already been established under chapter number one that equality is to be found among all the seven skies in the number of earths each one of them possesses. The Qur'an clearly expresses this reality too through the following statement:

193) When our Clear Signs are *constantly* being recited to them, they say, "This is only a man who seeks to prevent you from what your forefathers had been worshipping." And they say, "This is nothing but a fabricated lie." And the disbelievers say of the Truth, when it has come to them, "This is a clear magic." We have neither given them books that they might be studying, nor have we sent any warner before you. Their predecessors too had belied *it*, and they have not reached even to the tenth of what we have given them. So, they belied my messengers. How was my punishment



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193) When our Clear Signs are *constantly* being recited to them, they say, "This is only a man who seeks to prevent you from what your forefathers had been worshipping." And they say, "This is nothing but a fabricated lie." And the disbelievers say of the Truth, when it has come to them, "This is a clear magic." We have neither given them books that they might be studying, nor have we sent any warner before you. Their predecessors too had belied *it*, and they have not reached even to the tenth of what we have given them. So, they belied my messengers. How was my punishment



then?<sup>320</sup>

Remember, the chapter no. 34 of the Qur'an, to which the current verses also belong, was itself commenced with the passage 'All praise be to the Almighty to whom belongs whosoever is in the skies and whosoever is in the earths; to him belongs the praise in the Hereafter; and he is all-wise, all-knowing. He knows whosoever is entering the earths and whosoever is getting out of them, and whosoever is descending from the skies and whosoever is ascending in them, and he is all-merciful, all-forgiving' to affirm the multiple creations of man and his constant gathering between the skies, which we have dealt with under statement no. 81. Then, the statement of "The disbelievers say, 'We shall repose our faith neither in this Qur'an nor in the one earlier to it'" has also been advanced right in the middle of this very chapter to convey the repeated revelations of the Qur'an upon only the present man, which we have detailed under statement no. 133. Consider now the phrase 'When our Clear Signs are being recited to them' in the current statement, which is continuing with and building upon this very dual philosophy of the multiple creations of man and the repeated revelations of the Qur'an upon him, and making an extremely forceful mockery of the disbelievers that when the fact of the matter is such a marvelous one, how could their accusations of magic concerning the Qur'an and of the fabricator of lie concerning the holy Prophet hold any water in them. And in order to further reinforce the fact of the previous revelations of the Qur'an, the real identity of the book belied by the previous disbelievers has once again been omitted in the subsequent phrase of 'Their predecessors too had belied.' It should particularly be recalled here that exactly the same phrase had similarly been repeated in statement no. 118 too after conveying the fact of the multiple revelations of the Qur'an through 'The Almighty has abundantly revealed the fairest discourse such that it is a Book similar and oft-repeated.' Then, by maintaining this very omission yet again in the immediately subsequent passage of 'they have not reached to even the tenth of what we have given them,' these previous disbelievers are very stunningly reported as not having reached even to the tenth of the total number of revelations of the Qur'an destined for them!! Remember, both the successively appearing pronouns 'they' and 'them' in it are, in accordance with the requirement of a continuous and coherent speech, indicating these

predecessor disbelievers of the Qur'an alone. And by maintaining this very continuity concerning them, the statement of 'So, they belied my messengers. How was my punishment then?' is also being made subsequently, which lends further credence to this contention. This is the reason why that after stating their denial of the Qur'an through the phrase 'Their predecessors too had belied,' the statement 'So, they belied my messengers' concerning themselves is again being made subsequently in the same verse to argue upon all their previous denials of the other Qur'an brought to them by these messengers as contained in the statement of 'they have not reached even to the tenth of what we have given them.' So, if their former denial concerns the Qur'an, the latter one, through a spectacular change in phraseology, involves that of the messengers who had brought the other Qur'ans to them earlier to that. Thus, the Qur'an, instead of directly specifying the total number of lives destined for the current man, employs an indirect speech in quietly indicating the proportion of the Qur'ans revealed upon the previous believers thus far. It can now be pondered as to how comprehensively both these current and former statements are summarizing all our previous discussion in this book concerning the multiple creations of man and the repeated revelations of the Qur'an upon him.

Thus, when the minimum of two hundred thousand of lives accorded to us until now aren't even the tenth of those that have been destined for us, then it could be inferred from it that one should get at least two million worldly lives. Though this number looks quite astonishing, but it would be an immensely small and insignificant period of time in view of the deep-rooted divine strategy prevalent through out the length and breadth of this extremely vast and ancient universe. Man himself would be, on the Day of Judgment, compelled to consider the entire worldly life to be not more than that of a day or even less. The Qur'an conveys this fact in the following words:

193.1) They would be asked *on the Day of Judgment*, "How long did you live on the earths in terms of years?" They would say, "We have lived for a day or a part of it..."<sup>321</sup>

193.2) The day He will gather them, *it will appear to them* as though they had lived *in the world* for merely an hour of the day...<sup>322</sup>

It can now be pondered as to how intense is the sense of abundance and



exaggeration that is contained in the earlier statements of 'Every soul shall taste death, thereafter we shall severely test you by evil and by good,' 'I have provided him with beds excessively,' 'Indeed, this *Qur'an* has been revealed repeatedly by the Lord of all the worlds,' 'These are those Signs of the Clear Book' and 'Indeed, we have repeatedly swapped it amongst them that they may receive admonition.' Thus, in view of the current disclosures, it is high time that chapters 4 & 5 of this book are read once again in order that full justice is done to the comprehension of the Qur'anic statements quoted therein. Now, when we have spent so many of our lives unconsciously, the reminder of them too would pass off in the same manner, and both the believing and the disbelieving classes would continue to remain addicted to their respective desirable and undesirable behavior in all of their future lives as well in line with their past and current ones.

It can again be contemplated if at all it is difficult for man to be tested with assorted and diverse worldly lives when a minimum of two million of them have been destined for him. It can, thus, very well be inferred from it that the good fortunes and felicities one has been bestowed with or deprived of currently aren't at all realistic in nature, but are merely indicative of these very bouts of recreation and testing. If the turn of this bestowal or deprivation is someone's presently, it could be some others' subsequently, and yet others' thereafter, so that each and every one of them is provided with fair and equitable opportunities of faith and faithlessness, and none should be able to come up with any excuse on the Day of Judgment. Moreover, we also do not know as to how many more of the trials have been determined for us in the remaining skies about which we haven't absolutely been given any knowledge besides the known ones.

When the universe is so many billions of years old, and would continue to exist for hundreds of billion more years still, a pertinent question arises as to what might have been its state prior to it, and as to what might happen to the matter consisting it after its ultimate extinction. Both these questions assume greater significance when it is also born in mind that quite a few theories based upon compelling intellectual evidence are doing the rounds in the realm of science for a considerable period of time. Besides, there is also the still larger question of determining the Doomsday that is bound to overwhelm us all. The Qur'an, thus, begins offering its guidance in the

following words:

194) Do they not think for themselves that the Almighty has created the skies and the earth and that which exists in between only with a purpose and for a determined term...?<sup>323</sup>

We have already established in our previous discussion, through numerous Qur'anic statements, that all the seven skies and all the other bodies existing in them have been created in six days. This suggests that they have all been created at some precise point of time in the past. Likewise, the current verse is making another assertion that they have been created only for a determined term. So, in the same manner in which the universe had a definite beginning, it shall have a definite ending as well. The universe is finite, thus. The Qur'an depicts its beginning in the following words:

195) Don't the disbelievers observe that the skies and the earths were bound together before we split them...<sup>324</sup>

This verse also forms part of statement no. 189 at the beginning of the current chapter. It is very much clear from it that all the skies and earths and all the other bodies had been joined together earlier in the form of one singularity that was split later on to be given the present form. Besides, the Qur'an makes another declaration concerning the same in the following words:

196) We have built the skies with *our* might, and, indeed, we are constantly expanding *them*.<sup>325</sup>

It is too evident from this statement that the Almighty did not merely create the skies and all the other bodies contained in them but he is also expanding them on a continuous basis right from their formation. Note particularly that in order to generate this meaning of the expansion of the skies, an active participle *moo'si'oon* has been advanced in the original Arabic text instead of the customary verb, since the attribute of the former is relatively more enduring than the latter. Thus, when the universe had a beginning, and it is also constantly expanding, its eventual culmination too has been described at another place thus:

197) The day when we roll up the skies like the rolling up of a scroll for books...<sup>326</sup>



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197) The day when we roll up the skies like the rolling up of a scroll for books...<sup>326</sup>



Remember, if statement no. 195 pertained to the earlier part of chapter no. 30 of the Qur'an, the current one concerns its concluding part, which is quite meaningful too. It is very much obvious now that when all the skies and all the other bodies contained in them were joined together as a single entity, and they are also constantly being expanded ever since their splitting and subsequent fashioning into their current forms, rolling them up now clearly indicates turning them back to where they were originated from. That is to say that they would be merged back into the primordial singularity eventually. The Qur'an unveils this very reality through another turn of phrase at a different place thus:

198) Man asks, "When shall the Doomsday be?" So, when the sight is dazzled, the moons are eclipsed, and the suns and the moons are merged. Upon that day shall man say, "Where can the refuge be?"<sup>327</sup>

The very meaning of the rolling up of the skies conveyed through the previous statement is also being put across through the passage 'the moons are eclipsed, and the suns and the moons are merged' in the current statement. When the skies are rolled up, it is but inevitable that all the other bodies contained in them including the suns and the moons will also be merged together. It can, thus, be observed that all the suns and the moons present in all the skies have been advanced as singulars in their generic forms by omitting the mention of the compulsorily accompanying earths once again here too. Nevertheless, merely the passage 'the moons are eclipsed' itself is remarkably revealing this omission, as it is only the earths that cause the lunar eclipse.

Another significant reality baring itself from the current statement is that the rolling up of the skies itself would be the onset of the Doomsday. That is, it would uniformly encompass all the seven skies in existence. Thus, the current statement is interpreting as to the meaning of the rolling up of the skies and the time of its eventual occurrence. Consider now the following five more of the Qur'anic statements which, without any additional explanation, reinforce this general nature of the Doomsday even further:

199) They ask you as to when would the Doomsday be. Say: "Its knowledge is with my Lord alone; it will only be he who would disclose it at its time; it would, *however*, weigh heavily in all the skies and the earths..."<sup>328</sup>

200) They did not esteem the Almighty the way he deserves, whereas all the earths would be in his fist and the skies would be rolled up in his right hand on the Last Day. Glorified and high above their associates is he.<sup>329</sup>

201) When the trumpet is sounded, all those who will be in the skies and all those who will be in the earths would loose their consciousness except for those whom the Almighty pleases. Thereafter, when it is sounded again, they would be standing and looking on all of a sudden.<sup>330</sup>

202) Whosoever is in the skies and the earths shall appear before the Merciful as a servant. Indeed, he has surrounded them and counted them thoroughly. Each one of them shall come before him on the Day of Judgment all alone.<sup>331</sup>

203) We shall destroy every habitation before the Doomsday or administer them severe punishment. That is written in the Book.<sup>332</sup>

The current verse is appearing in the context of the statement 'Your Lord knows very well all those present in the skies and the earths' occurring just a couple of verses earlier to it. It can, thus, be inferred from it that the different earths of the universe are once again metaphorically being considered as 'habitations' here too. So, a statement is being made herein that the inhabitants of each and every earth would either be destroyed or severely punished prior to the advent of the Doomsday. That is to say that the Doomsday would certainly befall all the earths of all the skies, however all of them wouldn't uniformly be inhabited by the creatures at the time of its occurrence, as it is the case presently too: if some of them are inhabited, others have been destroyed long back. Hence, many of the habitations would have been destroyed even before the onset of the Doomsday, and those remaining at that time would be made to face the severe punishment. Consider the current statement once again in the light of all the previous six statements as to how realistic all our arguments were with respect to the denotation of the term 'habitation' in the universal context to be an entire earth.

In view of these extremely clear statements, thus, it is very much obvious that ever since the creation of the universe it is only the children of Prophet Adam who are constantly being given existence and tested in it, and shall continue to be so until its eventual extinction. This fact too has literally been mentioned in the Qur'an at another place thus:



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In view of these extremely clear statements, thus, it is very much obvious that ever since the creation of the universe it is only the children of Prophet Adam who are constantly being given existence and tested in it, and shall continue to be so until its eventual extinction. This fact too has literally been mentioned in the Qur'an at another place thus:



204) Satan said, "Look, this (i.e., Adam) whom you have honored above me, if you grant a respite to me till the Doomsday, I shall certainly overpower his progeny except for a few."<sup>333</sup>

Before concluding, this humble writer would also like to discuss both the previous and subsequent states of the current universe so that a comprehensive picture and full magnitude of the divine creation and providence should not elude us:

205) Don't the disbelievers observe that the skies and the earths were bound together before we split them...<sup>334</sup>

This verse has also been dealt with under statement no. 195 in another perspective. Now, the phraseology employed here needs to be pondered once again, which is quite meaningful. Remember, it isn't being stated here that the skies and the earths had been fashioned out of some previous matter from scratch for the first time. It is, however, claimed in very clear terms that they had been joined together previously that were merely made to split. This revelation unmistakably suggests that they did enjoy another bout of existence in their split state prior to the current one, after which they may have been bound together! Consider now two more statements which reinforce this contention even further:

206) The day when we roll up the skies like the rolling up of a scroll for books; just as we began the first creation, so shall we repeat it: a promise binding on us; we shall certainly fulfill it.<sup>335</sup>

As described under statement no. 197, the talk here involves the rolling up of the skies on the Doomsday. In this perspective, thus, 'the first creation' compulsorily concerns that of the skies itself. The talk of repetition and recreation subsequent to the extinction of a thing should only pertain to that of the extinct one is entirely logical too. Remember, 'first' is an extra word here. Had the repetition of only the current phase of the universe been intended, the statement would have certainly looked like 'just as we began the creation, so shall we repeat it.' This meaningful addition, thus, is implying the multiplicity of its occurrence in the past. Hence, it is very powerfully being indicated here that the skies and the earths haven't been given existence anew in the past merely once, but several times as well! Then, the phrase 'so

shall we repeat it' is making another significant revelation that the process of recreation of the universe doesn't end with its current phase alone, but it will continue to be repeated once again in the future too!! It should also be born in mind here that the pronoun 'it' is indicating only the 'first creation.' Thus, the preference of the phrase 'the first creation' over its current phase for conveying the recreation of the universe once again leads to the far-reaching conclusion that each time only the first creation is repeated, rendering all of them to resemble each other. In this manner, all the previous and subsequent universes bear resemblance to the current one.

207) He it is who begins the creation and then repeats it, and this is very easy for him. Its superior instance is in the *creation of skies and the earths*. He is the al-mighty, all-wise.<sup>336</sup>

Two of the attributes of the Almighty are being mentioned here through the initial phrase of 'He it is who begins the creation and then repeats it' that he originates the creation and then continues to repeat it again and again habitually. Remember, this very lesson of the origination of the creation in each of the many live phases of every earth of the universe had also been given through a similar statement under statement no. 19 too. Besides, the subsequent determiner 'its' is referring to the immediately preceding pronoun 'this,' which itself is substituting for the verb 'repeats.' It is, thus, being conveyed through the passage 'Its superior instance is in the skies and the earths' that an even better example of this creation and its continued repetition is to be found in the creation of the universe itself. Thus, the current as well as the previous two statements are interpreting and reinforcing one another.

Now, when the universe itself is being meted out with regular bouts of creation and destruction, a relevant question arises as to when this whole sequence got started, and until when it might continue to exist. The Qur'an sheds ample light upon this phenomenon too in the following words:

208) Those who are wretched shall be in the fire, wherein there shall be sighing and sobbing for them. They shall remain therein forever, so long as the skies and the earths themselves remain...<sup>337</sup>

The wretched souls are being stated here to be in the fire or hell for eternity. The Qur'an makes tens of such statements time and again, for



instance:

208.1) Those who disbelieve and belie our signs, shall be the inhabitants of fire; wherein they shall remain forever.<sup>338</sup>

208.2) The one whose scales will be light are the ones who have incurred loss; in the hell they shall remain forever.<sup>339</sup>

When the wretched people are to remain in the hell eternally, and the expression 'They shall remain therein forever, so long as the skies and the earths remain' is literally conveying that this eternity would last till the skies and the earths themselves last, then the very obviously converse meaning of this would be that the universe too is eternal!! Thus, when the skies and the earths have existed several times previously too, the obvious meaning of this statement is that they are only eternal in nature: joined together at times, and split from one another at others.

It can be noticed once again that in the same way as the Qur'an argues upon the abundance of the earths in the galaxies with the solitary mention of the existence of the accompanying moons in them, or the existence of man in the universe ever since its creation with the mere statement of its year to be consisting of only twelve months since then, it is asserting the eternal nature of the universe indirectly here too through the affirmation of its existence until the subsistence of the punishment of the hell itself. In this manner, the current as well as the three previous statements are mutually interpreting and strengthening one another.

After so many clear Qur'anic statements concerning the perpetual nature of the creation and obliteration of the universe if we examine the different scientific theories and hypotheses on the subject, we do find a more or less similar concept in the form of the big bang theory. According to this theory, all the matter in existence was joined together in the form of a primeval atom, which exploded some 10 to 20 billion years ago. Eventually, the exploded matter took the form of the galaxies of the universe initially, and stars and planets subsequently. The universe is expanding continuously ever since the explosion, and would continue to expand for many more billions of years, after which it may contract again and result in the big crunch. The time it took for the expansion would be the same for the contraction too. In about 70 billion years, thus, it would fuse into the primeval atom once again. After a

period of time, it may explode again, heralding the onset of another round of the origin and extinction of the universe. This cycle of explosion and collapse may be in existence from an unknown period of time, and would continue to exist endlessly. And we ourselves do not know as to which of its phases we find ourselves in today. This theory, originally proposed during the first quarter of the twentieth century, continues to gather considerable direct and indirect scientific evidence in its support during the past many decades and has progressed to be the most popular hypothesis in the realm of science today.

Consider now as to how consistent this theory is with the above-narrated Qur'anic statements. The claim at both of these places is one and the same that the universe was joined together earlier to its creation in its current form: 'the skies and the earths were bound together;' it was split billions of years ago: 'then we split them' and 'we have sent him to a hundred thousand or more;' it is expanding since then: 'we are constantly expanding;' it will continue to expand for many more billions of years: 'they have not reached even to the tenth of what we have given them;' it may fuse into the primeval atom once again: 'The day when we roll up the skies like the rolling up of a scroll for books;' it may explode again heralding a new universe: 'just as we began the first creation, so shall we repeat it;' this cycle of explosion and collapse may be in existence from an unknown period of time, and would continue to exist ceaselessly: 'They shall remain therein forever, so long as the skies and the earths themselves remain' etc. Even though there seems to be variation between them concerning the total life span of every phase of the universe, and perhaps they may even vary in details too, there may not be any major difference between them in principle. The Qur'anic knowledge, thus, gets substantiated by the empirical one, and the following prophecies dealt with in detail under statement no. 7, come true too:

208.3) Soon shall we reveal to them our signs in the environs of the earth and the skies and in their own lives until it becomes manifest to them that this is the truth. Isn't it enough for your Lord to be witness over everything?<sup>340</sup>

208.4) Say: "Praise belongs to the Almighty alone. Soon shall he reveal to you his signs, and you would certainly recognize them."<sup>341</sup>



It can be considered once again that when the current phase of the universe was initiated by organizing all the earths in all the seven skies, the divine statement concerning the creation and testing of man in it was 'I am placing a "successor" in the earths,' which we have dealt with in detail under statement no. 74. Now, when the universe is being given existence and destroyed on a continuous basis, it is very much obvious that the creatures being tested in its current live phase become the successor of those who have already been tested in its previous phases. It necessarily follows from this too that the universe had been bestowed with another creative phase previously too, in which some other creatures had been given existence as our predecessors.

### References:

- <sup>1</sup> 39:67
- <sup>2</sup> 25:61
- <sup>3</sup> 71:16
- <sup>4</sup> 85:1
- <sup>5</sup> 15:16
- <sup>6</sup> 37:6
- <sup>7</sup> 67:3
- <sup>8</sup> 71:15-16
- <sup>9</sup> 41:9-12
- <sup>10</sup> 25:59
- <sup>11</sup> 31:10
- <sup>12</sup> 16:12
- <sup>13</sup> 79:27-30
- <sup>14</sup> 65:12
- <sup>15</sup> 25:59
- <sup>16</sup> 7:54
- <sup>17</sup> 41:53
- <sup>18</sup> 27:93
- <sup>19</sup> 38:27
- <sup>20</sup> 44:38
- <sup>21</sup> 42:29
- <sup>22</sup> 24:45
- <sup>23</sup> 8:55

- <sup>24</sup> 16:49
- <sup>25</sup> 17:44
- <sup>26</sup> 53:31
- <sup>27</sup> 45:22
- <sup>28</sup> 5:40
- <sup>29</sup> 10:99-101
- <sup>30</sup> 4:170
- <sup>31</sup> 109:3
- <sup>32</sup> 21:11-17
- <sup>33</sup> 65:8-12
- <sup>34</sup> 19:93-98
- <sup>35</sup> 27:65-66
- <sup>36</sup> 55:29-37
- <sup>37</sup> 42:5
- <sup>38</sup> 2:164
- <sup>39</sup> 29:19-20
- <sup>40</sup> 42:29
- <sup>41</sup> 31:11
- <sup>42</sup> 10:4
- <sup>43</sup> 32:7
- <sup>44</sup> 36:51
- <sup>45</sup> 30:9-11
- <sup>46</sup> 36:31-33
- <sup>47</sup> 20:128-29
- <sup>48</sup> 10:13-14
- <sup>49</sup> 2:21
- <sup>50</sup> 7:100
- <sup>51</sup> 21:30
- <sup>52</sup> 19:75
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**Sayeedur Rahman**, is a research scholar in Islamic studies and modern science at Furqania Academy Trust, Bangalore, for the past more than two decades.